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Official Records

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Tribute to the memory of Judge Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley, member of the International Court of Justice

The President: Before we take up the item on our agenda for this afternoon, I must with deep regret inform the General Assembly that Judge Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley, a member of the International Court of Justice, passed away on 24 October 1995.

Judge Aguilar Mawdsley, a distinguished diplomat and jurist, had a long and close association with the United Nations. He had served as Chairman of several Main Committees of the General Assembly, as Permanent Representative of his country to the United Nations, as President of the Security Council and as Head of the delegation of Venezuela to a number of major United Nations conferences, notably the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. Judge Aguilar Mawdsley had been a member of the International Law Commission since 1979 and a member of the Court since 6 February 1991.

In his long and distinguished career, he made important contributions in various fields, in particular in the fields of diplomacy and international law.

I am sure that I interpret the sentiments of the General Assembly in expressing its condolences to the President of the Court and his colleagues. I would also like to ask the delegation of Venezuela to accept, and to transmit to the Government of Venezuela and Judge Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley's bereaved family, our expression of sympathy at this sad loss.

I invite the General Assembly to stand for one minute in silent tribute to the memory of Judge Andrés Aguilar Mawdsley.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silence.

The President: I now call on the representative of Venezuela.

Mr. De Rosas (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela would like to say how grateful we are for the very kind and generous words that you, Sir, have just spoken about Judge Aguilar on his passing away yesterday. Be assured that we will convey them to our Government and to Judge Aguilar's family.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/INF/50/5/Add.1, which contains a tentative programme of work and schedule of plenary meetings for the rest of October and the month of November. This addendum supersedes document A/INF/50/5 and the announcement I made on 12 October. This schedule is being issued to assist delegations in planning their work. For its part, the Secretariat will endeavour to ensure that

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the relevant documentation is available to delegations in advance of the discussion of any given agenda item.

I should further point out that there are still a few agenda items for which no date has been indicated. I will announce the dates for the consideration of those items in due course and sufficiently in advance. I will also keep the Assembly informed of any additions or changes.

I should like to inform Members that agenda item 28, entitled "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina", will not be taken up on the morning of Tuesday, 31 October, as scheduled. The item will be considered at a later date to be announced.

The list of speakers for each of the items listed in document A/INF/50/5/Add.1 is now open.

As I mentioned to the Assembly in my earlier announcement, I hope to keep close to this schedule so that the Assembly can discharge its responsibilities as effectively and expeditiously as possible. I again appeal to those representatives submitting draft resolutions to do so sufficiently in advance of the dates fixed for consideration of items to give members adequate time to examine them.

I should also like to remind representatives that additional time is needed for draft resolutions involving changes in the work programme or additional expenditures since they will require the preparation of a statement of programme budget implications by the Secretary-General. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee will need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before it can be acted on by the Assembly.

While on the subject of draft resolutions, I should like to inform members that in view of the number of draft resolutions expected under agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", and the possible need to hold consultations on them with a view to reaching consensus, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under agenda item 20 will be Friday, 10 November 1995.

Last but not least, I should like to ask delegations to continue to keep in mind the limitation of Secretariat services, resulting from the financial crisis facing the Organization.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Commemoration to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year

The President: This afternoon, the General Assembly will hold the second of the plenary meetings to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and to consider, with a view to adopting it, the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

I now call on the representative of Norway, Ms. Ingrid Nordbø, Youth Representative.

Ms. Nordbø (Norway): As a youth representative of Norway to the General Assembly it is a great honour and a pleasure for me to focus on youth and global youth policy in a plenary meeting of the Assembly.

Let me at the outset express my appreciation of the fact that the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which is also the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, has focused on a draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. We regret that there has been no consensus on the draft text. We hope, nevertheless, that Governments will use the draft Programme as a guideline for further development of national youth policy.

Youth is a part of the population with specific needs and potentials. Young people are not solely human beings passively waiting to enter adulthood; nor are we a more demanding and troublesome version of the child. Youth is a stage marked by strong sentiments and values. It is a period of life characterized by enthusiastic energy combined with a critical view of the established structures of society.

The youth of today is experiencing a rapidly changing world. Some aspects of the global development are not causing positive effects. Our vulnerable environment is suffering from pollution, and devastating wars are going on in several parts of the world. Recent decades have increased our consciousness that the Earth is fragile. It is more crucial than ever that it be populated by responsible and concerned people, ready to unite their efforts in finding global solutions. In order to strengthen this feeling of responsibility and concern, youth must be given the opportunity actively to take part in the shaping of society. We must be given a fair opportunity to influence decision-making at all levels. The fiftieth session of the General Assembly has discussed the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The United Nations has recognized the need for a global youth policy. I hope that this will lead to a greater awareness of the specific needs of youth, not only in the Governments here present, but also in the various United Nations agencies which are working with youth in the field around the world.

I would like to draw attention specifically to one of the priority areas mentioned in section IV J of the draft Programme, entitled "Full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making". The Programme stresses the importance of enabling youth to participate actively in order to be integrated into and to influence the society they are, and will be, living in. It is important that youth at an early stage be able to use their resources and energy in constructive contribution to the decision-making processes, and not give up because of the overwhelming challenges the world is facing. A feeling of resignation amongst youth must be prevented. The successful implementation of the important results of the Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing Conferences needs the active support of all generations.

Youth organizations should be recognized as schools of democracy. Through active participation, young people will gain experience in how democracy works. Recognizing youth organizations as important arenas for developing skills necessary for efficient participation in society, Governments should facilitate their existence by respecting full freedom of association, and should contribute with financial, moral and organizational support.

In Vienna four years ago, a global youth forum brought together 150 representatives of national, regional and international youth non-governmental organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. In 1996 another United Nations youth forum is scheduled. The United Nations system should provide financial resources to ensure that the event can take place. The Organization should encourage Governments to include youth representatives in their national delegations to the General Assembly and other United Nations events. This will give youth an opportunity to influence and share their ideas and perspectives with decision-makers within the United Nations system. Further, it is a valuable experience that these representatives will make use of in their work with youth issues in their home countries. Very few countries practice this today on a regular basis, although the experiences of those countries that have youth representatives are positive. The General Assembly has already invited Governments to include youth representatives whenever possible in their national delegations. I will remind all Member States of their responsibility to implement this resolution.

It is my sincere hope, that the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year will not be reduced to a commemoration of the past, but that the opportunity will be used to look forward, and to identify the challenges and potentials of the future.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Philippines, Mrs. Amina Rasul-Bernardo, Presidential Adviser on Youth Affairs and Chairperson of the Philippines National Youth Commission.

Mrs. Rasul-Bernardo (Philippines): We celebrate this year the half-century of existence of an instrument for peace, an institution that was forged in the foundry of human tragedy. It is a celebration that is deserved, for the folly and the risk of a conflagration of the magnitude of the last two global wars have been averted.

The United Nations has done more than this. Not only have fewer young men and women died needlessly in battle, but the co-responsibility of nations in a global community has meant that proportionately fewer have died from communicable diseases. Proportionately fewer have suffered from the blindness of illiteracy. Proportionately fewer have died from hunger and poverty.

Proportionately fewer, yes — but in absolute numbers, more.

The United Nations declared 1985 as International Youth Year in recognition of the difficulties faced by the young owing to the lack of adequate opportunities for education and training, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, poor health facilities and services and lack of participation in the life of society and decision making, among other things.

Today, the world's youth, numbering over a billion people, still cry out for the opportunities to be provided to them, that they may fulfil their rightful roles in society as partners in the development of their nations. Of particular concern to the international community is the plight of vulnerable and disadvantaged youth — those in areas of conflict, in foreign-occupied or alien-dominated territories, refugee and displaced youth, indigenous youth and those with disabilities; the girl-child.

The populations of the developing countries are becoming younger, while those of the mature economies are ageing rapidly. This reverse demographic trend implies a number of things. One effect will be increased youth migration from the developing to the developed societies in search of opportunities as well as in response to these societies' need for younger blood to fuel their economies. There will also be pressure for equitable access to the world's resources and services and the upgrading, if you will, of the structures and mechanisms for development worldwide.

A global response that will open up greater opportunities for youth in the developing nations is indispensable — not only because this is the morally correct thing to do, but also because it will be ultimately beneficial to the whole human community that it be done.

The other day, our Heads of State and Government adopted a Declaration on the fiftieth anniversary of this Organization. They expressed their resolve to redirect the United Nations to the greater service of humankind, especially to those who are suffering and are deeply deprived. This is the practical and moral challenge of our time. In the words of the Secretary-General, the fiftieth anniversary should provide the occasion to "rekindle the ideals of the Charter", and for the United Nations to reach out to a wider, more global audience, especially young people. In this way, the United Nations will be both strengthened and renewed.

It is with these considerations that we in the group of 77 and China welcome the United Nations Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. This is the logical step to take after the Conferences of Rio, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing. We laud the Beijing Platform of Action for its focus on the girl-child.

We hope that all countries will work conscientiously towards the achievement of the goals of the youth programme. It is imperative that the international community support the programme with a generous commitment to the shared responsibilities implied by this document.

The Philippine Government has been sensitive to the requirements of our youth. First, the Constitution of our Republic clearly enunciates the responsibilities of Government. Thus, it provides that

> "the State recognizes the vital role of youth in nation-building and ... shall encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs".

Secondly, our Constitution explicitly directs the Government to allocate the largest share of the national budget to education.

Thirdly, we have closely involved the young in the institutions of local governance. This is a unique element in the deepening of our democratic culture. We have empowered our youth at every level of local governance. Beginning from the village council, or "barangay", we have organized youth councils composed of elected representatives aged 15 to 21 — unique among Member countries of the United Nations.

Fourthly, we have appointed youth sectoral representatives to our Congress to ensure their full participation in the country's law-making process.

Fifthly, the Philippines has created the National Youth Commission to coordinate all youth-related institutions, policies, programmes and activities of Government and to ensure participation in national development.

Sixthly, the Philippines has adopted a national youth development programme that ensures priority attention to the needs and the concerns of young people.

In all these initiatives since 1985, Government has endeavoured to strengthen the development of a value system anchored in the sanctity of family life, compassion, civility, respect for others and a responsible balance between material affluence and cultural and spiritual enhancement.

The Philippines looks forward to the United Nations Programme of Action on Youth as a larger framework within which we could situate our own initiatives on youth development. Within that framework, broader international cooperation on youth concerns becomes more feasible. We look forward to orchestrated global action to create a human community where our young will no longer be exposed to the needless trials of the flesh and the spirit, but will grow to assume responsible stewardship of our societies and the environment.

We take this opportunity to draw the international community's attention once again to the plight of migrant workers, many of whom are young and are becoming increasingly younger. The youth of this diaspora are particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. We therefore urge all countries to speedily ratify the United Nations Convention on Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. We also believe that it is high time that a global conference on migration and development was convened to address this global phenomenon.

At this juncture, the Philippines invites all countries to participate in the upcoming global indigenous and youth cultural olympics, which will be held in Manila from 24 February to 3 March 1996. This project flows from the successful 1993 global youth earth-saving summit held in the Philippines, which developed partnership between indigenous communities and youth for sustainable development.

Our own national hero, Jose P. Rizal, who was martyred very young, wrote "the youth is the hope of the motherland." All Governments recognize this to be true. And yet, youth continues to be marginalized, and in many areas exploited and abused.

All States have a responsibility to mobilize youth's abilities, to sharpen their creativity and inventive genius and to redirect their enthusiasm and hope for the freedom of all peoples from fear, hunger, and injustice. However, it is now an issue with a global dimension, and thus requires a global response.

It has been a decade since the Declaration of the International Youth Year. Yet the problems of youth remain, and are possibly increasing. Worse, access to opportunities and basic services remains as problematic as ever.

We who represent the aspirations of the youth of the world call for the approval of the United Nations Programme of Action for Youth. We call on the international community to provide the necessary resources to implement programmes addressing the needs of the youth of the world.

A young Filipino martyr in the dark days of martial law in the Philippines, one of many who helped break the chain of dictatorship, asked:

> "If we do not care, who will care? If we do not act, who will act? If not now, when?"

I ask the same question today: if not now, when?

The President: I now call on the representative of Barbados, The Honourable Mia Amor Mottley, Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture.

Ms. Mottley (Barbados): First of all, let me express the sadness of the Barbados Government at the passing of Mr. Kenneth Dadzie, who for almost four decades distinguished himself in public service, both for the United Nations and for his own country, Ghana.

It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly at a time when world attention is focused on the significant contribution this body has made over the past 50 years. Let me convey to the United Nations the greetings of the Government and the people of Barbados, as well as congratulations on the attainment of its golden milestone. Fifty years in the cause of world peace has often seemed an elusive and formidable goal, yet as we approach the end of this millennium, a renewed hope stirs our imagination and challenges us to bring into being a new world order based on tolerance, mutual respect and good will.

It is with young people that this challenge must squarely rest, for they will help to shape the structure of that new world order. We live in a world where economic gains are often realized at a tremendous cost to the poor, the marginalized and the socially deprived. Our young people represent our hope for the future, yet public policy often mortgages their future, laying tremendous tax burdens, environmental stress and social fragmentation on their shoulders. The famous African-American poet Gwendolyn Brooks asked in her poem "The Children of the Poor",

> "What shall I give my children who are poor; who are adjudged the leastwise of the land, who are my sweetest lepers; who demand no velvet and no velvety velour ...?"

As we turn our attention to such questions during our observance of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, perhaps we may find the answers that bring hope.

The intervening decade has witnessed mind-boggling changes, ranging from the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of communism in Europe to expanded markets and the emergence of major trade blocs, which sometimes threatens the economic viability of small island developing States. In spite of this activity, many young people remain spectators at a play whose denouement continues to be a mystery. Can we blame them if they remain cynical and adopt an existential stance towards their existence?

A young French mathematician and philosopher by the name of Blaise Pascal summed up this mood best over 300 years ago, when he said,

> "when I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of space of which I am ignorant and which knows me not, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there; why now rather than then?"

This echoes the comments of the speaker who preceded me, the Chairperson of the National Youth Commission of the Government of the Philippines.

Our task must be to steer our young people away from the nothingness of this void. It is therefore fitting and timely that the World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 contains measures which, if implemented by Governments, should redound to the benefit of young people everywhere. The Programme focuses on providing new opportunities for young people, integrating youth-related concerns and national development policies and plans, protecting young people from harmful drugs and addictive substances, fostering racial and religious tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among young people and, most important of all, dealing with the question of employment opportunities for young people.

The Government of Barbados, like those of other Member States, subscribes to these principles and has endorsed them in its national youth policies. Barbados also recognizes that if young people are to participate fully in the socio-economic life of our society, they must be given opportunities for educational attainment commensurate with their aspirations. Hence our belief in ensuring that children at the primary and secondary levels have 100 per cent access. They must also be allowed access to employment opportunities, or self-employment, and training must be provided, whether in particular skills or in business opportunities.

Many States Members of the United Nations are newly independent countries, having gained independence in the last 30 years. The challenge for the former colonies is to forge a path that is culturally relevant and developmentally sustainable and to place strong emphasis on that cadre of young people who hold the key to national identity and prosperity. Young people demand change. We must be the architects and craftsmen of that change.

I therefore welcome the themes identified some 10 years ago by the General Assembly for International Youth Year: participation, development and peace. Today they will serve as a worthwhile model for integrated action at all levels. This should serve to address more effectively the problems experienced by young people in society. I therefore applaud the broad and diverse inputs from other international instruments into the Programme of Action.

The Government of Barbados realizes that the challenge of meeting these themes can be met only through a scientific and participatory approach to youth policy and youth development: scientific, because resources are scarce and we must therefore maximize the benefits to be gained from our programmes and not simply shoot into the air; and participatory, because that is the only way we can reach the young people.

For young people, Governments are often faceless bureaucracies producing many words and little action that has a direct impact on them. We in Barbados believe that if we are to succeed in reaching those people who are marginalized, we must first put a face on government. As one of our primary programmes, we have therefore identified a system of appointing a number of Youth Commissioners responsible for motivating, counselling, mobilizing and channelling 80,000 young people at the ground level into programmes already provided by government in all areas of social and economic activity. They are the eyes, ears, hands and feet of government, because at the end of the day we must be able to say to those young people that here is someone whom you can trust and on whom you can rely.

In addition, there is a Youth Entrepreneurship programme directed at young people who want to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurial activity. Through this programme, we are now offering technical and financial assistance and are developing a mentor programme that will give those young people the opportunity to consult closely and work with established business persons in the private sector. The ultimate objective of this programme is to create confidence among young entrepreneurs, because if they fail they will not return to the life of business.

The Barbados Youth Service represents yet another attempt to reach those young people by providing a framework of character building and discipline while still providing skills to encourage their personal development and growth. These youth programmes are buttressed by extensive training programmes in the formal and non-formal education sector and, indeed, through interaction with other social service agencies. Such programmes, we believe, provide for the rekindling of hope, the building of trust and the development of confidence among young people. At the end of the day, if you do not talk to them and relate to them in a language and a style that they understand, they will remain outcasts in their own country.

We believe that no single programme will ever succeed in meeting this challenge fully. Our responsibility as Governments therefore must be to create an environment in which both governmental and non-governmental organizations can create a safety net that is wide enough to catch the diverse needs and interests of young people.

As difficult as the battle is for Governments, I daresay that the real struggle lies within that individual young man or young woman. Let the words of a beloved young Barbadian artist, Edwin Yearwood, who is an icon for young Caribbean people, stand as an inspiration to each one of those young persons:

> "A voice in my head keeps telling me the road is long
> It tells me we must be strong,
> It tells me we must go on.
> Today is the start of the rest of my life".

This time, perhaps, we will all hear that voice.

The President: I now call on the representative of Latvia, Ms. Linda Jākobsone, Youth Representative.

Ms. Jākobsone (Latvia): As this is the first time that a youth representative from Latvia has addressed the General Assembly, I should like to express my appreciation for this honour, especially on such an occasion as the special commemorative meeting to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. Following the adoption at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly of resolutions 49/152 and 49/154, the Latvian Government decided to include a youth representative in its official delegation to this session of the General Assembly. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to represent Latvia here.

I should like to address the General Assembly on a topic that is quite timely for the United Nations: tolerance. This is the United Nations Year for Tolerance. Tolerance is something that we all need in our everyday lives, something that makes our personalities free and allows us to be independent in our understanding of the world. In this context, I should like to address the issue of tolerance from the perspective of youth.

I am 19 years old. This means that I am no longer a child. I am no longer a schoolgirl who plays with her dolls in the playground. I am old enough to make decisions on my own: vote, get married, travel on my own. I am responsible for myself, but not for the things that are happening all around the world. However, there are things I can influence to make my life, and other people's lives, better.

But what do we understand by the word "better"? For each person, it has a different meaning, based on our individual values rather than on our colour, age, gender, religion, language, culture or nationality. Tolerance begins by listening to different opinions and by trying to understand where they come from.

There is a popular drawing that depicts children holding hands around the globe. It shows that children do not see the differences in colour, gender or nationality, but accept everyone. The differences begin to grow only as children become older. We should learn a lesson from the very young and treat other persons as individuals first, leaving their superficial differences in second place. We have to treat the world in which we live as the best, and only, world we have. We should try to unite the world, not drive it apart. We have to accept that there is enough space in the world for everybody, and that there will continue to be, if we stand for peace — peace between nature and human beings, among nations, countries, peoples, neighbours, relatives and families. Peace can be reached only through tolerance. But who is thinking of tolerance now, and who will bring it to the world? I think that we cannot wait for future generations to bring peace; we have to act now.

The future belongs to youth. The young have always had the task of breaking with the old and bringing in new ways. While this has not always worked, we should at least try. Youth are the next politicians, business people, parents, teachers, scientists, writers and presidents. They will determine the course of the years to come. Those of us who are still quite young are already thinking about what sort of world we are going to live in, have our families in, bring up our children in.

The world is getting more complicated every day: new machines, computers, guns, chemicals. In many parts of the world, the standard of living is getting higher, but is life really getting better? I am not certain that it is. The world is getting more polluted and more dangerous; wars are still being waged. Why? If people are getting cleverer every day, why do they not understand each other?

I believe that it is our nature to take. We have to learn how to give. Tolerance grows only through education. It is very important to understand this so that we may change the circumstances in which we live. The legacy of our parents was that of a different world, a world governed by the cold war, and we cannot blame them for it. But we must be aware of what we need to learn to change the world. The education we need to truly become tolerant is not just what our parents and teachers can give; it includes meeting people, travelling, participating in cultural and educational exchanges. We do not have to agree with the thinking of everyone we encounter. We just have to try to accept that people do not always think alike.

One of the routes to tolerance is through the campaign "All different — all equal". It is essential to accept others as they are, without trying to change them, because we can live only our own lives, nobody else's. But there are limits to tolerance. There is a narrow line between interfering — most likely in a well-meaning way — and tolerance. Which is the most honest way? The answer lies within each of us. We have to listen to our hearts.

The United Nations is a place where people from around the world can meet and share their views. For now, it is like a card game. If we want to win, we do not show other players our cards. And if we show our cards, we do so only if we are sure that the other player is on our side. We do not lay down all our cards together, because there is always a possibility that someone is keeping something up their sleeve, and then the others lose. What are we playing for? For nothing less than our future.

I understand that people are not always good, with pure intentions, though I wish I could think so. Nevertheless, what if we take the risk of showing our cards and discover that people are the same everywhere — the same living, breathing human beings, people who are basically good despite their flaws? While we probably will not be ready for such a step in this millennium, I would like to think that the third millennium will be the one in which we achieve understanding.

I think the role of youth in this process is so important because we are old enough to know the rules, yet brave — or inexperienced — enough not to follow them. Let us change something in our lives every day, starting with small steps, thinking about our actions, giving someone an unexpected smile from the heart, saying — or withholding — the one word that can change someone's day. We need children's and youth assemblies to unite people from around the globe. Such assemblies would serve to share and dream about what is best in the world instead of worrying about the problems in our countries.

I think that small things are so important in our lives; sometimes a favourite book, a friend, family, or even a flower on a different planet — as in Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* — can be more important to our world than economics and politics.

This is the understanding we need to bring peace and tolerance to our planet.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands, Ms. Hilde Laffeber, Elected Representative of Youth.

Ms. Laffeber (Netherlands): I am very happy to be given the opportunity to speak here today as a representative of the Netherlands and as a representative of the youth of my country on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. The question is: will this anniversary be a real celebration or just another commemoration?

The themes of International Youth Year were participation, development and peace. These were also the themes that dominated the guidelines and programmes involving youth adopted at a session of the General Assembly similar to this one, in 1985. Participation, development and peace were also the themes that were supposed to be central to the situation of youth in the 10 years between these meetings. Supposed to be, because — although there is no official evaluation of the most recent years of national and international policies involving youth at our disposal — these goals have certainly not yet been fulfilled. As regards participation, this cannot be underlined more clearly than by the relatively small number of youth delegates present here.

In 1985, 50 countries accredited young people to address the issue of "Youth". This year, only about 10 countries have done so. In the other areas also, the goals of International Youth Year are far from having been achieved.

As you know, the cold war has ended, and therefore the original incentive of putting the theme of peace so prominently on the agenda of youth policy has disappeared. But new wars are being fought, which disrupt the lives of young people in a number of countries and create ever-increasing flows of refugees. This is not only a problem for the young people themselves; it is also a problem for their societies as a whole.

For example, in refugee camps, children up to the age of 16 are generally offered some form of education. Their parents, mostly women, receive guidance in coping with their new situation and are involved in many activities. Youth, however, have hardly anything to do in these refugee camps. It is not surprising that this continued inactivity sometimes leads to situations in which they form gangs and get involved in criminal activities.

With this attitude, and without education, how can these young people be the ones who will lead their countries into a new future? Why not try to incorporate youth in education and other programmes in the camps to make them invest their energy in a positive way, involving them in the medical and other social services, or putting them in charge of the security of the camps? Creative ideas to improve the life of young refugees are missing in the draft World Programme of Action for Youth as it stands now. I do hope this idea will be put on the agenda of the ongoing discussion on youth in the coming years.

Young people are clearly underrepresented in the field of social and economic development. A great number of young people are unemployed. Youth unemployment can be seen as the main reason for the social marginalization of youth, wherever they live. They enter a vicious circle of marginalization, underemployment and delinquency, for which they are then held responsible.

This is especially true for young migrants. They are often discriminated against and resented in their new countries or new home towns. Society tends to treat them either as victims or as criminals. But they are not to blame for every crime or for the lack of jobs. It is the role of Governments to take up this issue and try to change the situation for and with youth.

The issue of environment and development was barely addressed in 1985, but it is of crucial importance to the youth of today. Governments still seem to overlook the key role young people can and should play in the field of environmental development. Young people, not only in my country but also around the world, are very concerned about the vulnerability of their environment. More than the older generations, today's youth are taking action in the field of environment, varying from very practical acts — something as simple as cleaning up litter in public parks — to more elaborate programmes. An example of the latter is the partnership that the Commission for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Development Programme have developed with three major international non-governmental youth organizations dealing with environmental questions, to set up a large information system for youth on Agenda 21. It has also been decided to celebrate a youth day during the Commission's session in 1996. These are exactly the kinds of projects that can and should be set up when implementing the paragraph on the environment of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth, as they create a partnership for action between established institutions and youth.

With regard to International Youth Year: Participation, Development and Peace, I think the two latter themes of the Year make sense only if the first goal has been fulfilled. In other words, is it not just as strange to have a celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year without youth as it would be to have a Women's Conference without women?

Consider the following. Youth constitute approximately one fifth of the world's population. Youth have first-hand information on how they want their lives to be and how their lives are. Youth want to make a positive contribution to the discussions on youth-related issues at the international level. Youth are key agents in social development and change. Participation of youth brings with it a lot of responsibilities, with which we are willing to deal but first of all, participation of young people is a right. However, Governments are the ones who can make the choice on whether they will take participation of young people seriously.

Since 1985, and even before that year, several resolutions have been adopted by this very General Assembly in which Member States are invited:

> "whenever possible, to include youth representatives in their national delegations to the General

> Assembly and other relevant United Nations meetings" (*resolution 47/85, para. 11*).

This invitation found a wide response at the Women's Conference in Beijing, where over 80 young people were included in the official delegations. Unfortunately, only a few Member States have included youth representatives in their delegations to this General Assembly.

Youth are defined in the United Nations as women and men from 15 to 24 years of age. Youth representatives to the General Assembly are young people in national delegations, often elected through a national youth council or another non-governmental organization platform of youth, and accredited as advisers by their foreign offices. It is, of course, a very specific instrument for strengthening the participation of youth, but it is the one I have most experience with. I have participated as a member of the Netherlands delegation in the informal consultations of the Economic and Social Council, in the Third Committee, which deals with youth within its social affairs agenda, and now in this plenary session on youth. I consider this instrument to be a very important one. A good way to be acknowledged as a full participant — although I am only 19 — by 40-year-old members of other delegations in the discussions is to be able to speak at the same level as they do, as a delegate or a representative of my country.

I hope you will consider having a youth delegate in your delegation next year, when once again a substantial resolution on youth will be drafted and adopted. But instead of a resolution on youth, why not try to make it a resolution by youth?

This would certainly be an improvement compared to the situation concerning the draft World Programme of Action for Youth, which, hopefully, we will be adopting tomorrow. This has been in the drafting stage for several years, but only very few young people and youth organizations have had the chance to influence the draft Programme. The enormous negative influence this has had on the draft Programme was very obvious during the extensive informal consultations of the Economic and Social Council, earlier this month and during yesterday's formal meeting of the Council. Here was a group of diplomats, with long experience in life, attempting to improve the text of the draft document. It was a very frustrating process for a young person. Not that these diplomats were incapable or unwilling. But young people were a very small minority in these consultations: only Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands had youth representatives present there; there were none from other regions of the world. There were not enough of us to convey the concern of youth on how youth would like to improve its own situation and on the positive contribution it can make. So basic information on these issues was also lacking.

This example indicates clearly that in the implementation of the draft Programme, it is an absolute necessity to include participation of youth at all levels and at all stages of the process. At the international level, an excellent opportunity for youth to meet, exchange ideas and provide the United Nations system, as well as young people all over the world, with direct information on programmes involving youth is the Youth Forum of the United Nations system. This Youth Forum was established in 1991 and is first of all a platform for national, regional and international youth organizations. Also, cooperation between the Forum and the United Nations organizations most involved in youth issues is very strong. The main objectives of this Forum are to strengthen youth efforts in the field of youth participation, to establish more effective and efficient channels of communication between and among youth and youth-serving organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, and to promote the implementation and monitoring of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth. The second meeting of this Forum will be held in 1996, and I hope it will prove to be a major factor contributing to the implementation of the World Programme.

I would conclude that, after a decade of international youth policy, we are still far from achieving the goals of International Youth Year: participation, development and peace. So I cannot really consider this anniversary a celebration. It should not, however, be concluded that international youth policy has failed altogether. In fact, in 1995, the new aims of youth policy, as set out in the draft World Programme of Action for Youth, are certainly worth pursuing. But they can be usefully pursued only if there is international backing and genuine support from all quarters, with no hypocrisy or hidden agendas, and with the active and full participation of young people at all levels.

Youth are not the problem: we are the solution.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Turkey, Mr. Çelem.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Fifteen years ago, in 1979, the General Assembly designated 1985 as International

Youth Year. The themes of the Year were participation, development and peace. In 1985, the General Assembly also endorsed guidelines for producing specific measures addressing the needs of young people. These guidelines have assisted us in formulating plans for the well-being of young people in our countries over the past 10 years.

Ten years should not be considered a long time. However, in the last decade, our world has entered a process of rapid political, economic and socio-cultural change, which still continues and which affects us all. Youth is both benefiting from and falling victim to these drastic changes. As experienced in parts of Europe and Asia, the end of the cold war opened up new horizons and created new opportunities for young people to improve their skills and to participate in the development and transformation efforts of their countries. On the other hand, as in Bosnia and the Caucasus, armed conflicts brought about by these changes forced young people to set aside their hopes for the future and to take up weapons instead of taking up books, pens or computers. Instead of peace, tolerance and progress, they had to set their minds on methods to defend their independence and their dignity against aggressors who are inclined to perpetrate crimes of genocidal magnitude.

Societies' expectations of young people differ according to the level of development of a country. Some see young people as a key element in the existing development process; others expect youth to be a stimulating force for social transformation. In meeting the challenge of creating a society for all, young people occupy an important place with their unique characteristics. Young people in all countries are the guarantee of the future and of the renewal of generations. Their vision, their ideals and their energies are major sources of sustainable development. They all deserve a healthy environment, both physically and mentally, to develop their skills and contribute to the achievements of the societies they live in, in accordance with our expectations.

In this respect, the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (E/1995/123 and Corr.1) is a well prepared document. It points out major areas of problems that are contributing to the marginalization of young people, and draws a framework of universal standards of action to be applied by national, regional and international bodies to address these problem areas. I would like to thank and congratulate all those who have spent time and effort on preparing this document. If approved, the document will eventually become one of the most important achievements of the international community, which has in the last decade concentrated on addressing key dimensions of social progress.

The world population between the ages of 15 and 24 is estimated to be over one billion, representing 18 per cent of the total world population. Eighty-four per cent of that young population lives in developing countries, and in the future that ratio will increase. Implementation of the draft World Programme of Action when adopted, will therefore become a major question in the development efforts of those countries, and will bring the issue of regional and international cooperation to the forefront. Taking into account the fact that a great majority of young people live in countries with very limited resources, great responsibilities fall on the shoulders of regional and international bodies to assist developing countries in their research, policy studies, planning and coordination programmes relating to youth issues.

Turkey strongly supports the draft World Programme of Action for Youth, as it puts forward areas of priority and draws up the framework for global solutions.

Issues concerning youth entered onto the Turkish agenda for development following the establishment of the Republic in 1923. After having lost almost an entire generation of youth during the First World War and the War of Independence, to rear a new generation and to focus their attention on the development of the country became the most important goals of successive Governments. They activated all available resources, and in a short time a well educated, dedicated generation of males and females, in urban and rural areas, joined the drive for the development of my country.

For 70 years Turkey has been annually celebrating one day in its calendar as a children's holiday, and one day as a youth holiday. Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, in an address to Turkish youth, gave them the responsibility of defending and promoting the ideas and ideals of the Republic, encouraging them to participate fully, effectively and constructively in the development of the country. Last June, Turkey changed some articles of its Constitution, lowering the age limit to allow younger people to take an active part in the political life of the country.

Young people in Turkey constitute 21 per cent of the whole population. Issues related to youth have always been included in the priority areas of Government programmes. In fact, our national plans and programmes addressing youth issues have benefited greatly from United Nations themes and guidelines elaborated for this purpose.

Changes that are taking place in the world have repercussions for Turkish society. As one of the vulnerable sections of society, young people are sometimes positively affected by changes, such as the development of information technologies, and sometimes adversely affected, as in the case of the massive migration to metropolitan areas in search of a better future.

Official, private and voluntary organizations are active in Turkey to provide a healthy environment for young people so that they can develop their skills or learn new ones. Health services are provided to young people either free of charge or at a symbolic cost. The challenge confronting Turkish institutions is to extend youth services to all parts of the country as rapidly as possible and, at the same time, continue to improve them.

In Turkey, programmes addressing youth-related issues are designed to foster tolerance, respect and understanding among young females and males, without discrimination.

We cannot remain satisfied with what has been achieved up to now. In meeting the needs of young people, and in providing them with the necessary services to ensure health, development, training and happiness, there is always ground for improvement. The World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, once adopted, will undoubtedly be a very useful guide in our national efforts, as well as in the efforts of the international community as a whole.

The President: I now call on the representative of Japan.

Ms. Horiuchi (Japan): Just two days ago, Heads of State and Government assembled in this General Assembly Hall to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and to express their commitment to the creation of a better world for tomorrow. They addressed the question of how to shape that future the better to serve the needs of people everywhere, and at the conclusion of the series of meetings they adopted a Declaration embodying their common views on this subject.

Today, we gather to discuss the issue of youth. It is young people who in the future will act on the hopes and aspirations of humankind. In our view, it is therefore appropriate that we should now be taking part in this special meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

It is true, as is stated in the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, that:

> "Young people represent agents, beneficiaries and victims of major societal changes and are generally confronted by a paradox: to seek to be integrated into an existing order or to serve as a force to transform that order." (*E/1995/123, para. 2*).

It is for this reason that serious consideration must be given to the issues that confront young people and to the concerns that occupy them.

Some progress has been made in enhancing the well-being of people around the world. However, the profound transformation that the international community has undergone in the last few years has increased political and social instability to some extent. While the cold war has ended, the world continues to be plagued by, for example, recurrent regional conflict. Young people today live in conditions of considerable uncertainty. Yet there is hope that conditions will improve in the next millennium.

At the important World Conference on Women held last month in Beijing, and throughout the regional preparatory meetings, emphasis was placed on young women and girls as important agents of change, but also as persons unable fully to enjoy equal rights, and a special effort was made to promote their participation. In part as a result, problems such as underdevelopment, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, street children and adolescents were identified, and concern was expressed about the rapid spread of information technology and consumerism, as well as about the need to promote peace. To attack the injustices that women and girls confront, the Conference adopted a Programme of Action. It remains for us to translate the words of that Programme into action.

I should like now to turn to some of the issues facing Japan. A recent survey conducted by my Government reveals a certain mental and physical weakness that Japanese young people have developed as a result of growing up in an affluent society. Accordingly, my Government's central concern with respect to young people is to foster in them the mental and physical strength that they will require to shoulder the challenges of the twenty-first century.

To that end, Japan has established and developed what it refers to as friendship networks. In 1985, for example, in commemoration of International Youth Year, the Government launched the International Youth Village Programme, which brings Japanese and foreign youth together every year to learn about each other and to engage in a variety of educational activities. This year, 600 young people visited the International Village for a week — twice as many as in 1985, the first year of its operation. Japan also conducts several international youth exchange programmes — for example, the Ship for World Youth, the Ship for South East Asian Youth, the International Youth Development Exchange Programme and exchanges with Korea and China. Furthermore, 2,000 Japanese young people are currently in developing countries as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, contributing their skills and energies to the efforts those countries are making to promote development.

I should like to take this opportunity to touch upon an initiative that Japan has taken recently. On the occasion of the historic fiftieth anniversary of the end of the War, my Government launched a project called the Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative, the aim of which is to build future-oriented relations with our Asian neighbours and other countries by confronting the past squarely and promoting mutual understanding. The Initiative includes several youth exchange programmes and student-abroad exchanges which aim to promote mutual understanding among members of the younger generation. For example, every year approximately 130 young people are invited to participate in an Asian and Pacific Youth Forum.

While almost half a century has passed since the end of the War, a vast majority of people today did not experience it. In order to make sure that the horrors that occurred never occur again, we must not forget what took place. In this time of peace and abundance, it is all the more essential that we reflect on past errors, convey to future generations the violence and brutality of war and the many lives that were lost, and work resolutely for lasting peace.

The Government of Japan has long been aware of the multidisciplinary nature of the issue of youth. In 1949, after the War, an advisory council was established to ensure that the views of citizens were reflected in governmental policy. And in 1966 the Youth Bureau, subsequently reorganized as the Youth Affairs Administration, was created within the Prime Minister's Office to maintain coordination among the government ministries concerned and to implement measures relating to youth, in particular, international exchange programmes. The Government of Japan is of the view that it is essential to have a coordinating body of this kind to monitor and review overall policies and programmes relating to youth.

Our efforts to follow up International Youth Year resulted in 1989 in the formulation of a national plan of action, which was then revised in 1994. The plan addressed the issues of education, employment, juvenile delinquency, personal development and the family, and called for public information campaigns and research studies to be carried out. Ratification by Japan of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is helping to integrate our policies on youth, and we intend to further promote such policies and programmes, taking into consideration the outcomes of recent international conferences such as those held in Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that as partners and agents as well as beneficiaries of social development, young people are the key to building a better world. Government, non-governmental organizations and the international community must therefore work together on their behalf.

I would like to conclude by saying that while it is youth, the next generation, who hold the future in their hands, it is we, the Governments of the world, that are responsible for their well-being today. Our success today will help to determine their success tomorrow. Accordingly, the Government of Japan would like to affirm its renewed commitment to promoting respect for the rights, and to realize the potential, of young people everywhere.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, Mr. Wisnumurti.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): It is an honour for me to deliver this statement today on behalf of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture, Professor Dr. Wardiman Djojonegoro, who, due to unforeseen events, is unable to attend this meeting of the General Assembly dedicated to youth throughout the world.

This session has a special meaning for Indonesia. A relatively young nation, this year we are celebrating 50 years of independence. And, it was the young people of Indonesia who took centre stage in our drive towards independence and in charting a successful course for the country over the past five decades. Indeed, in 1928 it was young Indonesians from all over the archipelago who initiated the nationalist movement, ultimately leading to our Proclamation of Independence in 1945. Their effort is commemorated each year on 28 October, which is observed as Youth Oath Day.

Accordingly, the Indonesian delegation is most pleased to participate in these proceedings, which mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. On behalf of the Indonesian Government, I would therefore like to take this opportunity to renew Indonesia's fundamental commitment to concerted action on behalf of youth throughout the world.

There is a well-known saying that "One who possesses youth possesses the future". These words of wisdom carry a very important message for all of us. If we, as sovereign nations, want to create a world of peace and prosperity for all, then we must care for and nurture our young generation, imbue them with a sense of responsibility, and provide them with the necessary skills to meet future challenges.

At the present time, however, there are numerous problems that must be addressed. The population between the ages of 15 and 30 has more than doubled over the last 50 years, by far the largest increase occurring in the developing countries. For some, this has presented tremendous burdens. For many, it has limited the resources available to youth and for development programmes that offer hope and opportunity. Increasing population growth rates have been a contributing factor in the widening gap between the developed and developing countries, and between the rich and poor. At times, this has resulted in a marginalization of young people, creating the feeling — and frequently the reality — that they are disenfranchised.

Also, while we all hail the benefits of growth, development and industrialization with the potential for socio-economic progress, we recognize that uneven patterns of development can contribute to harmful patterns of migration. The migration of youth from rural to urban areas, and even across national boundaries, in search of employment and a better life does not always meet with success. For many young people, it is a rude awakening to discover that development may in fact pass them over, leaving behind a generation that is disillusioned and alienated, for whom it is too difficult to imagine that they do represent the future.

Too often, our actions do not match our words. When the international community professes stewardship and wise use of natural resources, and of the environment, the reality is frequently better characterized as depletion of precious assets — assets that directly affect the livelihood of future generations. We too often fail to recognize that the harmful practices of today create a shameful legacy for our youth, who are left to correct problems which were not of their own doing.

Where in the past our societies found sustenance and resilience in cultural values passed on from generation to generation, the current era of globalization seriously threatens established orders, causing a widening schism between old and new. Without strong values and a sense of identity, only confusion rises to the surface. And within such an environment, it is not surprising that drug abuse, crime and unacceptable lifestyles — sexual or otherwise — are on the rise.

Against this background, it is gratifying to note that this session of the General Assembly will deliberate on the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Although the Indonesian delegation has recommendations that we feel would improve the current text prior to adoption, we fully endorse it as an important first step on the way to creating a better future for all.

We must recognize, however, that this is only the first step. Much more needs to be accomplished, and the United Nations is the only body capable of undertaking the necessary activities. This Organization, and all of its specialized agencies, should therefore vigorously review the current conditions of youth throughout the world. At the same time, while we acknowledge the fundamental importance of the United Nations as the best forum to redress inequities with respect to youth, we as individual nations must all work to support that effort.

In Indonesia, we take this responsibility very seriously. From the beginning, young Indonesians have consistently taken an active part in the nation's development. At present, 31 youth organizations, combined in one National Commission for Indonesian Youth and representing various religious and political persuasions, actively participate in parliamentary discussions.

In that regard, our People's Consultative Assembly has directed the Government to plan and initiate youth programmes aimed at preparing the future generation, including national leaders — a generation which should be disciplined, responsive and self-reliant, and with a high work ethos. Most important, youth development in Indonesia is directed towards strengthening young people so that they will be capable of facing the challenges associated with Indonesia's continued development. In this respect, the focus is on imparting to the young a sense of responsibility to become pioneers of Indonesia's future development, similar to their fathers before them who fought for independence.

Our programmatic approach, which is elaborated in a country paper, goes across sectors, with intersectoral solutions. It addresses such areas as education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and provisions for constructive leisure time activities. Our approach is also holistic, thus acknowledging that the education of youth must be paired with opportunities for advancement and employment, while giving them a sense of pride in country and compassion for all humankind. In short, our efforts are focused on preparing our youth to compete in a global environment, and on strengthening their own unique identity as Indonesians. We believe that this will strengthen the resilience of Indonesian youth to face the future with confidence.

Indonesia's efforts to date, including those within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement, have convinced us that we can and must contribute to the resolution of the problems confronted by the youth in Indonesia and throughout the world. Ultimate resolution of those problems will undoubtedly require the most intense cooperation by all of us.

We should direct our efforts towards gaining insight into programmes and proposals that are helpful to individual nations, and that are appropriate to specific situations and conditions. Through our deliberations, we can learn how to solve our common problems, utilizing the United Nations and its specialized agencies as a medium for progress. Finally, our cooperation should be directed towards developing better monitoring mechanisms and preventing the occurrence of youth problems all over the world, now and in the future. It is my sincere hope that the current session of the General Assembly will strengthen such cooperation, for the benefit of all youth.

The President: I now call on Mr. Zaid Abdul-Aleem, Student Delegate of the United States of America.

Mr. Abdul-Aleem (United States of America): I am very proud and pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on the theme of youth in the global context. As an African-American citizen of the United States from a major metropolitan area — Chicago — a Fulbright Scholar in El Salvador and Brazil, and a Muslim, I bring a perspective on youth in both developed and developing counties that can lend a unique voice to these discussions.

While I have this opportunity to speak here today, I think of many individuals whose opinions and ideas are not recognized, including youth. While globalization can be productive, it can also be very destructive in its effect on certain sectors of the global society if people are not included, if their voices are not heard, and if their ideas not incorporated into policies.

Mr. Abibi (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Governments around the world, including my own, have officially recognized the need to consult with and work with those individuals, including youth, for whom commitments were made in the programmes of action resulting from recent international conferences — such as the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women. However, these commitments must become reality. For this, the voices of youth, as well as others, must be heard.

In preparation for this meeting, I asked a variety people in the United States and Brazil what they thought the role of youth should be in globalization. The answers were generally as follows: "Globalization? What is that?" "Globalization? Yeah, I know what that is. That's something for the first world. It can't help us in the third world." "Globalization? I don't know what that is, but children today need better access to education." And, "Globalization? I don't know what that is, but my Government needs to listen to all leaders in my society, not just the rich and powerful."

We recognize that these responses articulate the issues that the global community must address. And I know that there are a lot of people including those here in the United Nations and elsewhere in the world who are busy trying to answer these questions. However, I cannot reiterate enough the importance of listening to the voices of youth and paying attention to the solutions they propose. But, how do we prepare youth so that they — we — have the confidence to make our voices heard?

An exceptional few might make it but the majority of youth must be nurtured. As long as I can remember, I was told that I could do anything I wanted to do. I heard that message at home, in school and in the community. Young people around the world need to hear the same message on a regular basis. They should be free from discrimination due to race, class, caste or gender. They must be sufficiently free to dream and to believe that those dreams can become a reality.

However, having a dream does not make it come true. Through the material and spiritual support of my family, the positive influence of friends and support groups in the community, and a culturally enriching education, I was able to develop the pride, confidence and critical thinking skills that would later create opportunities for me. For only if they are provided a supportive environment in the home, community and school will children develop into youth who can recognize and create opportunities for themselves.

Investment in the family, investment in the community and investment in education must be addressed locally, nationally and globally. By providing youth with opportunities to cultivate their assets, develop their skills and their environment, and become confident in themselves, future generations will see a true global community representing all voices. Imagine the ills of racism, discrimination, sexism and ethnic conflict meeting head-on with masses of educated, well-informed, culturally rich and confident citizens. And imagine globalization proving to be more than just a political buzzword without a definition that prompts creative action.

While much work remains to be done to achieve our domestic as well as our international commitments for domestic social development, the United States has designed an array of activities to empower students as citizens and to ensure the safe passage of youth through the transition from adolescence to young adulthood. Examples include comprehensive services to reduce teenage pregnancy; the President's tobacco initiative to reduce smoking by children and adolescents by 50 per cent in the next seven years; community schools to forge partnerships at the community level and provide a place for youth to go after school and on weekends; enterprise communities where private and public institutions will collaborate to revitalize communities by improving job opportunities, housing, transportation and services; and a variety of programmes designed to address drug and alcohol abuse and substance abuse-related violence.

Most importantly, youth will be included in implementing these programmes in their own communities.

The promise of education continues to be a major focus of efforts to empower our citizens. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994 supports grass-roots efforts to help schoolchildren meet high standards for achievement and discipline. School-to-work programmes are uniting businesses, community colleges, and high schools to provide work-study experience and technical expertise.

In the past, young people did not routinely participate in developing their own educational plans. Now the Act mandates that students be invited to participate in developing, revising and reviewing their plans to ensure that their preferences and interests are considered. These programmes demonstrate the importance the United States Government places on investment in the family, community and education. However, they do not pretend to solve all our problems. Little will be accomplished unless young men and young women see the value of the programmes, have access to them, and take ownership of them. Nevertheless, programmes such as these might serve as useful models for confronting similar problems in other countries. In turn, programmes in other countries can undoubtedly enrich my country. While these models are a good start, they are nothing without proper implementation.

Whatever the appropriate model, we must move forward together with solutions. In doing so we should recall that, while youth may be the principal beneficiaries of programmes to strengthen the home, community, and school, youth can also contribute to the design and implementation of those solutions. We must make it possible for the voices of youth to be heard. We must also, as youth, demand of ourselves that we take the initiative to be involved. With our voices, we can provide part of the answer. We will be part of the solution.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Park Soo Gil.

Mr. Park Soo Gil (Republic of Korea): I should first like to commend the fiftieth anniversary secretariat and, in particular the Youth Task Force, for their preparations for the tenth anniversary of International

Youth Year and their support for youth-related events and activities.

The celebration of the capability and positive contributions of youth worldwide culminates this year in the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. In recognition of the fact that the young men and women who are the dreamers of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow, the decade-long observance of International Youth Year has progressively contributed to the formulation of more focused and effective global youth policies.

In order to continue to prepare for the time when one generation passes the baton of leadership to the next, I believe that it would be useful for broad channels of intergenerational communication to be established. This would help promote dialogue on the issues and concerns that affect today's youth and the challenges that await them as a collective generation.

With the world youth population currently at approximately 1.03 billion, the majority of whom reside in developing countries, it is critical to position youth policies and programmes as an integral part of all development goals. Indeed, it is only through a "holistic social approach", which envisions long-term solutions and a comprehensive strategy, that the international community can begin truly to address the problems that threaten the well-being of youth and hamper their full potential as a positive force in society. In this regard, both the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held this year, presented a timely and important opportunity for us to address the significance of youth in development.

In the light of the disturbing fact that children and young people are the primary victims of poverty and conflict in developing countries, it is clear that special focus must be given to them in our social development efforts. Another key element in our approach should be the pursuit of equal rights for women, by eliminating discrimination at an early age, expanding their opportunities in all areas, including education and health care, and elevating self-worth in society. The Republic of Korea wishes to see the World Youth Programme of Action to the Year 2000 and Beyond adopted by consensus during this plenary session. Among the priority areas suggested by the draft Programme of Action, the eradication of hunger and of absolute poverty are two of the most pressing issues at hand. As basic rights which should be afforded to any human being, it is crucial that the international community make the utmost effort to cooperate in resolving these problems.

Another critical area which requires concerted international cooperation is long-term human resources development. The decade-long experience of my own country's development process has proved that the education and training of young people is the key to success. Therefore, my delegation would like to stress the importance of improving the level of basic education, developing a wide array of vocational skills and raising literacy among youth.

Although global youth clearly represents a diverse population, coming from different cultures and varying socio-economic backgrounds, there are some problems which they commonly share. Among the most impending dangers are drug abuse, criminal activities and the growing peril of intolerance, which the international community must strive to overcome as threats to the well-being of its young members.

In the Republic of Korea, we have established a comprehensive long-term plan for youth entitled the 1992-2001 Basic Plan for the Youth of Korea, which has now been incorporated into the seventh and eighth half-decade Socioeconomic Development Plan. Moreover, in order to ensure the effective implementation of this programme, the Korean Government enacted a Basic Law on Youth in December 1992, which was designated as National Year for Youth. That same year, the Youth Development Committee was established under the auspices of the Prime Minister. We also currently sponsor annual exchange activities with seven Asian countries. By the year 2000, a Youth International Exchange Centre will be established for the administration of various international activities of young people.

Commemorating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and recognizing the vast potential of youth all over the world, my Government hosted the World Youth Leaders' Conference in Seoul in May 1995, which was organized by the International Association of University Presidents and the Korean Institute for Youth Development, with the participation of the United Nations.

The Conference was attended by students, scholars and academic leaders from 64 countries, as well as representatives of the United Nations. The Conference, whose theme was "What Should We Prepare for the

Twenty-first Century?" was a forum for the participants to reflect upon contemporary youth culture and to define the role and responsibility of the new generation in the age of globalization. The Conference provided these young people with a valuable opportunity to voice their concerns and share their visions with the older generation. The outcome of the Conference was the Seoul Declaration on an Ethical Renaissance and the International Student Initiative 1995. The final report of the Conference has been distributed as an official document (A/50/454) of the General Assembly.

An especially encouraging outcome of the Conference was the emphasis that today's youth placed on the need for the restoration of morality and humanity in society. As the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated in his message at the beginning of the Conference, it is essential that young people be empowered to utilize their freedom, energy and talents to create a world of tolerance and mutual respect and a sense of a shared human venture.

Although it is ultimately the responsibility of each Member State to address its own youth affairs, the United Nations can play a vital role in assisting national efforts in policy-making, implementation and coordination with other actors, including civil society.

Let me say, in closing, that the coming century will not be the era of my generation, but that of the young individuals who are only now embarking upon their adult lives. The youth of today must be wholly recognized as valuable members of the global society, and their visions and input can be a positive contribution to building a strong and just world community.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Eileen Coparropa, Special Envoy of the President of Panama.

Miss Coparropa (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to extend my congratulations to the President on his election to guide our discussions at these special meetings devoted to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and the discussion of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I join the millions of young people who are beginning to recognize their value and importance in the life of the international community. I share the joy of all the young people of the world at this initiative, which gives us our own voice and makes it possible for me to express to the Governments and institutions represented here the viewpoints of my country's young people and my delegation on the documents that have been drafted and discussed in recent years. I ask the President to convey our appreciation and gratitude to all those who have cooperated in preparing those documents for their important contributions to clarifying this complex issue, formulating objectives and defining measures with which to address it.

The presence of young people at this meeting of the General Assembly is of particular importance because, while we are the beneficiaries of many national and international initiatives, we are also victims of the profound changes taking place in contemporary society. No one has the slightest doubt that the policies formulated and adopted by our Governments and international agencies in this area have important effects on the daily life and the future of young people. We therefore wish to be a party to these decisions, and, above all, we know that we can act as agents of change because of our willingness to achieve a better way of living together, both domestically and internationally. To that end, we offer our hope, dynamism and dedication.

It is from this perspective that we aspire to play a larger role in the life of our societies, now more than ever, because today the very way in which we define, understand and value human beings is being profoundly affected by advances in science, technology, health and information.

My country is renowned for its geographic position and for the Panama Canal — that marvel of engineering, bridge of the world, heart of the universe through which pass tangible and intangible commodities from the four corners of the world. My country is a crossroads and a meeting place for races and cultures, and my people are noble, peaceful and cosmopolitan. We are attached to our traditions and proud of our traditional costume, the *pollera*, and the rhythmic expression of our dance, the *tamborito*.

Today, in preparing to receive, incorporate and utilize the territory of the Canal Zone on 31 December 1999, when the Torrijos-Carter treaties on the Panama Canal go into effect, my country faces the greatest challenge and opportunity since independence. This significant triumph for our nationhood has resulted mainly from the efforts of generations and generations of Panamanians. In the struggle, young people made the greatest part of the sacrifice, and their exploits inspired us in the process of enhancing national sovereignty and democracy.

However, in my country 66 per cent of the population are under the age of 35 and people between the ages of 15 and 24 represent 21 per cent of the total population. Of that youthful sector of the population, 42 per cent are employable, yet their unemployment rate has reached 21 per cent, twice the national average. Of those who do work, 35 per cent have a monthly income of less than $250, and some 14 per cent make less than $100 a month. This means that almost half of the young population in our country is living below the poverty line.

Panama is not spared the tensions that arise when young people are caught between hope and marginalization, between efforts to maintain our national identity and pressure from other cultures, between the desire to dare to be oneself and the overwhelming power of fads and fashions, and between the challenges of the scourge of drugs and the weakening of ethical and moral values, a tragic equation whose result is a more fragile family, which is the basic institution of civilized life for the peoples of the world.

We come here today aware that there are large, complex problems yet to be solved. We are subject to the factors that temper the optimism of most young people in the developing world. We know that we are living in a very complex world and that the simplicity of our lives as young people does not exempt us from feelings of anxiety and impatience. We recognize the values and the capital that adults have left to us, and we are proud that they have forged a social existence which allows no room for intolerance based on racial, religious or cultural considerations. This enables us to live in a society in which young people are not affected by discrimination or prejudice.

And yet young Panamanian women can see that in our society there are some disparities between the sexes. Despite the fact that primary education has been free and mandatory under the Constitution since the early days of the Republic, there is a sector of our young population that, because of economic and social factors leading to hunger, poverty and social disintegration, is more exposed to marginalization and crime — in short, to exclusion.

For most young Panamanians, the management of free time and its use for creative and healthy activities is a problem of concern to adults. The average income of the Panamanian family is insufficient to ensure that children and teenagers appropriately and consistently benefit from their free time.

It should therefore come as no surprise that I — an athlete, a swimmer — am making a special appeal to international organs and non-governmental organizations to help needy countries, and my country in particular, to seriously consider responding in their plans of action to our young people's demand that the necessary resources be allocated to sports, that sports centres be maintained and that new recreation areas be provided, these being necessary for healthy forms of entertainment and the development of a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Athletes are said to be the ambassadors of the world. I am certain that my appointment to represent Panamanian youth at the General Assembly is an example of the fact that young people involved in sports are showing that for young people the way to success, on the threshold of a new century, is through education and the cultivation of discipline, maturity, responsibility and the willingness to face challenges.

In his report "An Agenda for Peace", submitted in 1992, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, stated that an agenda for peace cannot be possible or lasting unless we encourage and promote "a new spirit of commonality" *(A/47/277, para. 6)*.

We young people have felt, sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly, that we have been excluded from a world built by adults and that, intentionally or unintentionally, we have not been allowed to participate in this spirit of commonality, which is so necessary in order to build a genuine culture of peace.

Therefore, serving as the voice of some half million Panamanian youths, I request that the obstacles to our participation be removed and that all forms of discrimination be done away with. I request that we be consulted as appropriate and that we be allowed a more direct involvement in formulating policies on issues related to youth; in the relevant decision-making processes; in drafting and assessing national development policies and plans; and in implementing plans to fight drug addiction and the harmful effects of drugs.

In particular, we need our parents to assume the responsibility they took on by bringing us into the world, to lovingly strengthen our ethical and moral values and to give us the affection, devotion and the communication we so desperately need.

To the young people of my country and the young people of the entire world, I wish to say that a new lifestyle is clearly needed, and that it will require all of us to change, especially youth. Youth is, first and foremost, heroism. Pope John Paul II acknowledged that

> "Young people have immense potential for goodness and creativity."

Along with our Holy Father, we must repeat that our enthusiasm is needed, as is our love of life. We must have the courage to be different, to be idealistic, to challenge in order to reform, to demand in order to participate. But above all, we must not be afraid to try to build a world in which we can live in harmony with nature, with humankind and with God, to build a new culture of solidarity.

What I have expressed today is what the youth of my country feels, as shown in an opinion poll that I wrote and carried out in order to reflect their concerns and their hopes as faithfully as possible.

To conclude, I wish to say that many words have been said, but now we must see to it that these words do not lose their credibility. It is time to lead by example. Our actions must reflect our words. By example, we should learn proper behaviour, love for our homeland and for nature, respect for family values and solidarity with those who have less or who have nothing.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Peter Friis-Nielsen, Youth Delegate of Denmark.

Mr. Friis-Nielsen (Denmark): As the representative of the Danish Youth Council and as a Youth Representative in the Danish delegation to the General Assembly, I am very pleased to speak at this plenary meeting.

> "Why does youth always have to become older before it is allowed to deal with the problems concerning youth?"

That reflection was made by Danish author Carl Scharnberg. The following quotation is from the general exchange of views of Heads of State at the World Summit for Social Development. Listen carefully:

> "No nation can ignore its youth, which is a human resource for sustainable development."

This year — the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations — we also celebrate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, held in 1985. Since then youth issues have become even more crucial, affecting not only a small group but an important and rapidly growing part of the world population. Today there are more than 1.03 billion people between the ages of 15 and 24. If we assess the condition of the youth of today, we see that throughout the world young people very often find themselves stigmatized as a vulnerable group, as an object exposed to a variety of problems. But young people are not merely an object; they are subjects — the subjects of the future. The world community needs a new approach to young people. We need action, and we need it now.

This new approach and plan of action will take its first leap forward through the draft World Programme of Action for Youth, which we hope will be adopted tomorrow. With youth on the agenda of the General Assembly, no one can reasonably ignore the importance of this topic.

However, reading the draft World Programme of Action for Youth confirms that youth is still put in a biased and traditional position. The section of the programme on "Development setting" states that

> "Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation." *(E/1995/123, para. 12)*

But this philosophy is not reflected throughout the document. In fact, it is almost absent in the final draft document, superseded by a rather paternalistic attitude. Has the draft World Programme of Action for Youth become a document on youth based on the premises of the elders?

For a solution to the problems discussed in the document, young people must be recognized as an asset and as genuine partners in the decision-making processes — as subjects of their own lives, not objects. Where is the youth spirit in the document — the spirit that proposes new ideas, new thoughts, new visions, new impetus and actions that will make the youth programme the tool it is meant to be? I search for this youth spirit — and I still long to find it.

The draft World Programme of Action for Youth has not become what we hoped it would; it has become a hammer without a handle, but it is the only tool we have. So let us act and create the handle in the process.

A Danish slogan once said that, "action is the best expression of opinion". Hence, to turn opinion into action here today, a full and visionary implementation of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth is the key word. We would therefore like to propose the following six steps of action.

Action One is this: think globally, act locally. These words have been a key concept in talking about sustainable development. But thinking globally and acting locally is just as central when talking about citizen participation in the work for human rights, social development and decision-making processes. Thus, to make young people become responsible citizens in society, Governments should establish the structures and platforms needed to ensure youth's participation in decision-making processes and, furthermore, to ensure cooperation between youth, independent youth organizations and governmental bodies. To put it in other words, there is a fundamental need for all countries to create or improve a national youth policy, one that allows young people to participate actively.

To come to Action Two, the draft World Programme of Action for Youth must be integrated into national youth policy. This integration needs to be initiated immediately. Thus, the United Nations should establish structures to ensure and improve cooperation between national youth bodies, governmental structures and the United Nations system.

Next, Action Three. The United Nations and Member States should ensure the continued work of the World Youth Forum and the participation of international youth organizations on an equal basis. The World Youth Forum can be seen as one of the basic tools for the process of implementation of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth. Hence the United Nations and Member States should ensure the financial support and funding of the Forum.

Now to Action Four. To ensure the implementation of the programme I recommend that the General Assembly designate the United Nations youth unit as the secretariat for this process. But for this to work successfully, there is an emerging need for a strengthened youth unit, renewed with a strong and visible presence of young people and enhanced cooperation with international youth non-governmental organizations. In conjunction with this, I urge the United Nations to ensure the continued financial funding of the youth unit.

Regarding Action Five, Young volunteers from international youth organizations should be sponsored to work directly on the implementation of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth. Member States are urged to provide financial and moral support for such youth volunteers.

Finally, Action Six. This General Assembly is celebrating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and has put youth on the agenda. But very few Governments have even thought about delegating youth to the General Assembly. This is an embarrassing disregard of the key persons. As a youth delegate to the General Assembly, it is therefore very important to me to encourage every Member State to include youth delegates in their future delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and relevant United Nations bodies. This would be an honourable action — an opinion turned into action.

Today we live in a world of interdependence — called by some "the Global Village". Any youth issue is closely connected to the sustainable social development of the world. This interdependence was clearly stated at the World Summit for Social Development. Thus the full and visionary follow-up on, and implementation of, the commitment made at the Summit is fundamental to future prosperity, not only for the youth of today, but for all world citizens.

The Danish author and Nobel Prize winner Johannes V. Jensen once said: "Youth is facing a double battle: the fight against itself and the fight against its elders. The latter is the toughest". May this quotation soon be history.

The youth of the world is ready to assume responsibility and take part in the work for world social development. Action is our best expression of opinion. Our focus is action; our time is now.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon Mr. Ammar Saati, Vice-President of the National Union of Syrian Students and Youth Delegate of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Saati (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): When the representatives of world

Governments meet at this high level to deliberate the realities of youth and to formulate a plan of action to deal with their problems over the coming period, such meetings and deliberations bespeak great interest in the future of our peoples and of mankind in general. Moreover, the interest we take in reviewing our work in this regard over the past decade expresses a collective desire to surmount the most difficult obstacles that face youth, especially as regards the possibilities of achieving peace through putting an end to all forms of colonialism and foreign occupation of the territories of others by force and the enablement of youth to exercise their right to establish their own organizations, to obtain assistance in resolving their problems and their right to participate in development through the creation of working opportunities for their creative contributions which must, in the final analysis, benefit humanity and ensure a decent future for its youth.

The Syrian Arab Republic has always been among the States that called for paying sufficient attention by the United Nations and its bodies to youth problems in various areas. The presence of representatives of Syria's youth and students in Syria's delegation to this meeting dedicated to the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, in addition to the fact that more than two thirds of the staff of our Permanent Mission to the United Nations belong to the young generation, reflect the interest my country takes in this social segment which was described by President Hafez al-Assad as "the hope of the present for the future and the hope of the future in the present". The interest Syria's political system takes in youth is part and parcel of an integral strategy which deals with the overall question of youth, taking into consideration the nature of our society and the tasks before it at this stage. Syria, as a developing country, aspires to achieve comprehensive human development side by side with socio-economic development. This calls for the mobilization of our people's human potential, especially that of its youth.

The leadership of President Hafez al-Assad has ensured for Syria, since 1970, the appropriate political stability and the democratic climate conducive to the widest possible popular participation. In this context, Syria's youth join non-governmental popular organizations that operate in full freedom and contribute effectively to the progress of society. In this regard, the National Union of Syrian Students is proud of the fact that President Hafez al-Assad was the first President of a student conference held in Syria, on 30 March 1950. This Union embraces university youth, students in postgraduate studies and students in higher and intermediate institutes, represents them before the various university boards, expresses their views on the curricula, contributes to decision-making, defends the interests and achievements of the students and helps to solve any problems that may stand in the way of their education and social activities. In the framework of this Union, which includes forces from various political parties, the students democratically elect their leaderships at various levels in full freedom. To ensure the widest possible educational opportunities for young people in Syria, education is free at the elementary, secondary, university and postgraduate levels. The State provides university residence for students for token fees that amount to half a United States dollar per month. This fee covers full board, utilities and services. The National Union of Syrian Students exercises its athletic, artistic, cultural, political and social activities in full freedom. It also organizes summer scientific camps, that embrace various disciplines, with the aim of linking university education in a practical manner with the life of society. In this regard, the Government provides the material requirements of these camps.

The Revolutionary Youth Movement to which the youth of Syria belong is an organizational framework and an educational forum for young people through which Syria's youth exercise their its democratic rights, elect their political leaderships, practice their hobbies and defend their interests at all levels: the educational, social, economic, vocational, cultural, touristic, athletic, artistic, informational, ideological, political and technical. The Union's membership is over one million-and-a-half young people. Forty per cent of them are young girls. The Revolutionary Youth Movement is represented in the Advisory Committees of the Council of Ministers which include: the Cultural Committee, the Planning Committee, the Services Committee and the Illiteracy Eradication Committee. The Union owns a touristic facility, two youth towns, a sophisticated publishing and printing facility; it runs more than 50 scientific clubs and publishes a youth newspaper.

The Union provides young people with educational opportunities through its support for Syrian schools, the development of the Syrian educational system and the enhancement of the educational standard of students. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic highly values the role played by the Union of Revolutionary Youth in eradicating the illiteracy of thousands of citizens in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture in the context of the campaign that aims at eradicating illiteracy before the year 2000, in addition to other volunteer activities which reflect positively on the process of progress and development in our country.

The Athletic Federation basically oversees the young people who have various athletic skills and hobbies. The State has built athletic facilities all over Syria which it placed at the service of the youth of Syria with the aim of maintaining the good physical health of young people and enhancing athletic cooperation with athletes all over the world through participation in various international games where the champions of Syria have scored many victories.

Several Government Ministries maintain close relations with youth organizations in two areas, namely health education, especially with regard to the AIDS disease and the prevention thereof, and the enhancement of environmental awareness to preserve the environment and reduce pollution. These organizations also organize continuous educational campaigns against smoking among young people, against the devastating scourge of drugs, and in the area of crime prevention. The Revolutionary Youth Movement maintains relations with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Family Planning Association, undertakes field studies and organizes educational campaigns that cover demographic concepts, reproductive health and family planning.

The youth and students of Syria, nurtured as they are by the humanistic values of their nation, especially respect for the values and customs of other peoples: justice, brotherhood, equality and the promotion of the principles of understanding and tolerance and the renunciation of intolerance, racism and all forms of racial discrimination and xenophobia, also believe in the need for peace to prevail all over the world and the need for a universal commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, they rally round the leadership of President Hafez al-Assad in order to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East region on the basis of the principles upon which the Madrid Conference was held in 1991, especially the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 425 (1978). To this end, it is incumbent upon Israel to withdraw immediately and in full from the Syrian Arab Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 and from South Lebanon and to stop obstructing the peace process. In the light of the foregoing, the strategy of the Syrian Arab Republic as regards youth is principally based on responding to their needs and to their aspirations in today's society.

These programmes take into account the rights of young people, including the right to education — a right that should be guaranteed by the State — the right to work, the right to participate in national decision-making, the right to articulate aspirations and needs, the right to organize themselves, the right to marriage and the right to housing. These rights are to be exercised within the capabilities of the State, as dictated by its by socio-economic circumstances. The enablement to exercise those rights should take place through economic, social, psychological, educational and rehabilitation programmes, as well as programmes of political and intellectual awareness.

The youth of the world, who are celebrating with their peoples the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, view with hope our celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year as another advance in support of youth, who represent the hope of achieving a world in which a just peace would prevail.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on The Honourable Algernon Allen, Minister of Youth and Culture of the Bahamas.

Mr. Allen (Bahamas): In this year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Charter, it is vital that we all recall the full terms of a resolution adopted on 18 November 1985 by the General Assembly, acting as United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year. Those terms, in full, called for participation, development and peace in the global thrust to deal effectively with youth, and five years ago the General Assembly further resolved that at the session marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Charter a plenary meeting — this one — would be devoted exclusively to youth questions.

Gathered in this place are youth Ministers or other official representatives of the nearly 200 States Members of the United Nations, and I have no doubt that each of us has special and peculiar experience, viewpoint or national report that can be of value to the international effort to save and promote the interests and development of young people.

Yet, irrespective of our individual contributions, and no matter what may be the characteristic programmes of action in our individual territories, we must all in this place today accept and acknowledge that there is around the world a supreme crisis of youth. It is a crisis which almost daily hits the headlines of most of our local media; which brings pain and disarray to many of our traditional family lifestyles and structures; and which, in consequence, affects the long-term national planning of too many countries. It is a crisis generally brought on by the various afflictions of poverty, hunger, delinquency, unemployment, criminality, sexual promiscuity, fatal diseases, illegitimacy, substance abuse and a general condition of powerlessness. It is a crisis which no nation or community has effectively escaped, a crisis which has been exhaustively explored and analysed by our individual countries and which we, through the instrumentality of the United Nations and our peculiar national inputs, can conquer through agreed guidelines and plans of action that may crystallize during this tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

These critical afflictions of youth in the Caribbean and in North and South America — as, perhaps, in Europe, Africa and parts of Asia — are particularly acute, and they invite a wider vision for a global remedy or, at least, relief. The report of the West Indian Commission of 1982 on social and economic issues of our region should sum up the resolute position of this special occasion when it states: "Now is the time for action".

On this question of the world's youth, we must adopt the attitude of survival along lines of common effort and combined strategies that we know can work. The ideal venue for that common effort and those combined strategies is here at the United Nations.

My responsibility in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas — a small but proud Member of this great international body — is to ensure the welfare, the progress and the future of our nation's young people. Our Ministry of Youth and Culture, together with the Ministry of Education, the police and the private sector, and armed with the report of a blue-ribbon National Consultative Committee on Youth — copies of which were distributed here today — has promoted a number of programmes designed to save and empower those young people yet within our grasp and to rescue from disaster those who have slipped through the cracks. These programmes span the broad spectrum of vocational, cultural, sporting and character development. In the limited time available to me I shall mention but a few of them.

With the establishment of an industrial training college, we are effectively dealing with those young people who, while they may not be academic stars, can be integrated into the system through a sensible and practical programme of trade and vocational training.

A "Let's read, Bahamas" programme, instituted in 1994, sought, and still seeks, to mobilize the interest of citizens, particularly young people, in expanding their reading and interpretation abilities beyond the classroom curriculum.

The Police Athletic League has been instituted, not simply to develop sporting enthusiasm among young people but, significantly, to teach and instil respect for the law, for authority and for the rights of others.

The Organization of American States assisted in the funding of, and is particularly impressed by and interested in, a pilot programme known as the Youth Enterprise Project, which is geared specifically towards unemployed school-leavers, who, with some skills training and personal development, can be cultivated into areas of self-employment. In that programme, which is tailor-made for most similar developing communities, there is special emphasis on the empowerment of young women who have fallen foul of society and who must often fend for themselves and their children. The private sector in the Bahamas has contributed appreciably to this national theme of youth salvation and development.

Thus it can be seen that we in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas have kept this matter of youth development and empowerment constantly on the national front burner, especially over the past three years when, all over the world, the proper direction of young people entered a plateau of crisis. While we must, in our individual countries, leave no stone unturned in finding solutions to our national and provincial problems with young people, the United Nations too must assume a sense and an attitude of urgency on the matter of the world's youth.

The United Nations has long accepted that there are no national boundaries in the areas of disease, famine, poverty, substance abuse, generic crime and crimes against humanity, yet it must also accept that many small and struggling States have no means of fighting these problems alone and that in this year marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year it must assume a glorious role of leadership in this transnational battle to save the world's youth and, thereby, ensure a battalion of capable leaders for tomorrow's world.

In every nation, in every language and in every ideological setting around the globe we use special terms of endearment when referring to young people — the bright tomorrows of our land. In recent years in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, we have referred to them as the "darlings" of the nation. Darlings, because they are intrinsically precious and fragile. Darlings, because they are proud extensions of ourselves, to whom we have a commitment to make proud, independent, worthwhile and productive citizens in their own right.

I now speak to this body, for the darlings of all the nations of the world, when I say that, whatever else the United Nations does, it must ensure the banishment from our children of the scourges of deprivation, famine and dispossession which militate against orderly development in our respective countries.

We must never forget that the peace and the brightness of tomorrow's world depend upon these, our youth, the most precious of our brethren, whom another promised would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Romania, Mr. Crapatureanu.

Mr. Crapatureanu (Romania): I have the privilege and honour to take the floor on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Alexandru Mironov, Minister for Youth and Sports of Romania, who regrets his last-minute absence from this important gathering. I now proceed to present his statement.

> "It is with great pleasure that I wish to address my most cordial greetings to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and, through my voice, to convey the warm salute of over 5 million young people from Romania, who represent a quarter of the population of my country.
>
> "Precisely 10 years ago, on Romania's initiative, the year 1985 was proclaimed "International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace". The resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in November 1985 expressed the desire to amplify the activities of all States at governmental and non-governmental level in order to stimulate youth programmes and activities. They also underlined the necessity to reinforce the efforts and the measures directed to safeguarding the observance of human rights, in particular those related to education and work, calling on national, regional and international organizations to support the global development of the young generation under the sign of understanding, progress and friendship.
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> "Over the years this call, addressed to a world undergoing continuous and rapid change, has not ceased to be heard, even if the voice has sometimes been muted by political and economic circumstances, by wars and calamities, by social movements, and by walls destroyed or raised. In spite of all of this, young people have continued to fight and dream, to learn and prepare themselves for tomorrow when they will become responsible rulers of the world they will build.
>
> "I am happy to share with you, as Minister for Youth and Sports, but also as a person whose entire career has been very closely linked with various issues related to youth, the experience I have gained during these last two years of activity *for* the young and *together with* the young. They are the ones who will determine the quality leap required for the change in mentality of a people that, for 6 years now, has been experiencing other fundamental and dramatic changes. The concepts that I consider most important in this context are: permanent education, modular qualification and continuous training, promotion of the value of and respect for work, faith in tradition and trust in the future.
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> "These objectives are found in the specific youth policies that we have shaped and defined within the programmes pursued by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the so-called "national programmes". Among them, may I recall the following: Civilization of the 21st Century (stimulation and education of creativity in the field of science and technology); ABC in Culture (youth cultural education); STYLE (education in behaviour, hygiene and health); Active Holidays (leisure-time education); Where To? (continuous education); S.O.S. for Youth (social assistance); The Young Farmer (reinvigoration of the Romanian village); Together (stimulation of the associative life); INFOTIN (establishment of a network of youth information and documentation centres); Clean Our Country (ecological education and training); Moralia (moral and religious education); and Romania in Tomorrow's World (international relations and youth exchanges) and the UNESCO-Open University project 'Youth in Evolution'.
>
> "Within this last programme, in 1994 and 1995, over 2,000 young people — academic winners of national and international contests on education subjects — have had the opportunity to visit Europe, America and Asia on study travel organized by our Ministry, with significant support from Romanian society. I am convinced that, for our young

international champions, this travel was a beautiful lesson on cultures and civilizations, and on the universal language of youth, knowledge, friendship and peace.

"We wish that all young people could carry forward the message of understanding and involvement in building the world of the third millennium. We wish that the world's cultural, scientific and technical heritage could become a link in international dialogue and that reason could triumph on the "blue planet". We wish that the peoples of the world could measure the force of their minds or bodies in keeping with the classic, ancient adage "*citius, altius, fortius*" on all sports fields, without violence, in the spirit of fair play and under the sign of unity through diversity. Then, for sure, the United Nations could become what all dreamers hope it will be: a real parliament of all nations on Earth."

Before concluding, on behalf of my delegation I would like to make two brief remarks. Firstly, we sincerely hope that the draft World Programme of Action for Youth will be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly. It represents a most useful policy framework and it also contains practical guidelines for the improvement of the situation of youth all over the world. Secondly, as one of the initiators of items regarding the status of youth, the delegation of Romania considers that the goals of International Youth Year are as valid today as they were a decade ago. In this respect, we consider that the adoption of the pertinent resolution on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond will contribute to further promoting the aspirations of young people to fully participate in, and to actively contribute to, the betterment of our societies.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.43

General Assembly

Fiftieth Session

Official Records

43rd plenary meeting
Friday, 27 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic People's Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Commemoration to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): This morning, the General Assembly will hold the third of its plenary meetings devoted to marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

I now call on Ms. Adelina Covo de Guerrero, Vice-Minister for Youth of Colombia.

Ms. Covo de Guerrero (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Colombian Government and the Ibero-American Youth Organization and, first of all, to transmit the greetings of Colombia's young people and their concern for promoting the policies needed for the harmonious development of Latin America's young people and the world's.

We can only be gratified by the demanding environment of this summit, which is in harmony with the current phase of development challenges and the gravity of the issues that are now being tackled by the countries of the world.

The best occasion to redefine the new directions taken by countries in search of development, peace and equality is that which is offered today by the United Nations on its fiftieth anniversary, which has struggled tirelessly for a better world Organization and has made efforts creatively readapt its policies to the new realities that prevail in modern society.

Drawing closer to the realities with which the world's young people live and identifying our responsibilities and our role in resolving the various issues that confront us represent perhaps the most important challenges of this great event.

It should be the constant preoccupation of Governments to devote the necessary importance and priority to the needs of young people.

In Latin America, young people are an object of great concern. In our continent we have more than 90 million people aged 15 to 24, a number which will grow to 105 million by the year 2000. This challenge has both rural and urban dimensions; 63 million of these youngsters live in the cities, and 27 million in the countryside. Among urban youth, the working class, now numbering 25 million persons, is of particular

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significance. Together with the 11 million rural poor, there are 36 million young people living in poverty, a figure which will grow to 42 million if the trend is not reversed.

Young women constitute an important part of subgroups among the young, and their presence will be even greater in the urban environment, particularly in the working class.

This situation, like that of the migratory movements of the youth population in the region, are of great concern. But I wish to draw particular attention to the condition of inequality that affects the youth population. This reality has been characterized by taking into account criteria such as the poverty line according to young people's income levels, their purchasing power and their access to social goods and services.

Colombia's young population represents 27 per cent of the total population of the country, or about 10 million Colombians. Of these, 67 per cent live in urban centres and 33 per cent in rural zones. Approximately 45 per cent of Colombia's young people live in poverty which, for 18 per cent, is extreme. This serious situation is manifest in the increasing restriction of opportunities for effective social integration for youth in national development.

Again, figures enable us to describe this situation. Although in Colombia great efforts have been made in order to extend secondary school availability, only 47 per cent of the population of student age have access to the education system.

There are similar problems with the access of young people to the labour market. In general, the integration of youth into the world of work is characterized by high unemployment levels — more than twice that of the national average — resulting from the prolonged search for work by young people entering employment for the first time. These levels are higher for young people from low-income families.

This situation is aggravated by the paucity of official assistance available to young people, which is indicated by the fact that the population sector aged 12-24 does not constitute for government agencies a clearly defined social sector as a beneficiary of programmes and services.

Owing to the specific historical conditions of our society, we can say that it is among the young that all the factors of violence are most dramatically condensed and expressed, making young people the protagonists of scenarios of greater conflict. Sadly, in our country, injury and violence are the main factors of morbidity and mortality among young men.

Narcotics trafficking and its social, economic and cultural impact on the young are matters of great concern for the Government and society of my country. This impact can be seen in high drug consumption rates, the stimulus to illicit riches, the participation of young people in illegal drug production, cultivation and marketing, the involvement of young people in violent systems and activities such as assassination, or the economic support provided by speculative drug capital, which discourages a culture of productive labour and stimulates violence. As a result, some 50 per cent of the persons accused of crimes in our country are young citizens.

There are, however, areas in which young people are making proposals and in which they are positive social actors. We have found great efforts being made by youth groups and organizations engaged in the search for the social and political recognition to which they are entitled, and for effective integration into national development. These efforts are often ignored by society, and have no impact beyond the immediate neighbourhood or frame of reference.

It is for these reasons that addressing the problem of overcoming poverty and the drugs issue, with young people as the primary object, our major preoccupation as a Government is to bring the general proposals of the National Development Plan creatively into line with the specific needs of Colombian youth.

The "Social Jump", the National Development Plan of the Government of President Ernesto Samper, the collaborative product of all Colombia's active social circles in search of a great domestic commitment to the present and the future, thus fulfilling the mandate of our political Constitution.

As an integral part of the "Social Jump", the Minister of National Education, in collaboration with the project Education: A National Proposal, is coordinating a deliberation and discussion process which, through seminars, assemblies, workshops and other means of discussion and negotiation culminating in regional forums, will lead to national consensus on the National Accord for Education. All those who participate in the local and regional forums and in the education departmental boards will be able to participate in the 10-year education plan.

The objective of the 10-year plan is to construct, with public participation, a longer-term education policy defining norms and agreeing on educational goals and purposes for the next 10 years. It will take into account prior national and regional consultations with trade unionists, teachers, students, parents, business leaders and governmental and non-governmental organizations. We will involve the whole country in converting education into a goal shared by all. From that deliberation, there should emerge very concrete commitments in each sector, which should respond to youth in this important area of development.

The Vice-Ministry for Youth, which coordinates Colombia's Youth Policy with the current Government's social policy, sees young people as political and social beings with rights and duties. For this reason, the Ministry's work focuses on the consolidation of young people's full exercise of their citizenship and the development of public policies aimed at guaranteeing that their needs are met and their interests given voice. In this regard, the guidelines of the Youth Policy of President Samper's Government are oriented towards guaranteeing comprehensive attention to the population of young people, intersectoral action by the State, specially designed policies and programmes, promotional actions founded on the strategic potential of youth in the area of development, the diversity of young people's world as a guide for establishing legitimate policies and the constant search in all our work for equity between male and female.

The Vice-Ministry for Youth focuses its actions on two central areas: integration and development of programmes for the young sector of the population, aimed at the implementation of social policy in areas such as education, health, recreation and sports, culture, employment and housing; and the consolidation of support programmes for regional institutional development, the organization and participation of young people, development of legislation and specific programmes for preventing problems such as drug addiction, AIDS, juvenile delinquency and violence.

Five years before the end of the century, new generations are living in a world full of international information. In this information framework, cooperation is a factor in knowledge, culture and peace, and today it must move ahead as a factor in the training of youth from all continents, as well as in meetings and exchanges between Latin American youths and those of other continents and between youths of the various countries of our continent.

Within this framework of initiatives, the actions we have been developing with the Latin American Youth Organization have been integrated with regional programmes of action for the development of youth in Latin America. The priority areas being addressed include education, employment and job training, health, participation and public institutions, integration and regional cooperation. Also, in conjunction with the National Youth Institute of Chile and under the umbrella of the Latin American Youth Organization, we have proposed to implement training schools for local youth agents in order to build a common framework for the operation of programmes and policies aimed at youth.

Overcoming barriers in economy, science and technology helps everyone, but especially young people. The same holds true for culture, and despite all the differences between countries and continents and the uniqueness of each one, there is much in common between life in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Europe and America.

Consolidating the common features and deepening our understanding of what binds us together, thus expanding the exchange of cultural values between youths of different countries and continents, is a task that is not only feasible, but also essential in order to build of a more harmonious and unified planet for the twenty-first century. We in Colombia dream of a just and prosperous world, a world within the reach of children and youths.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I wish to call the attention of all members to the fact that we have a long list of speakers. None the less, owing to the grave financial situation of the United Nations, the afternoon meeting must be adjourned at 6 p.m. I therefore appeal to all speakers to be brief so that all the participants, some of whom have come here especially for this occasion, can speak within the time allocated for today's meetings.

I now call on the representative of Canada, Ms. Isabelle Poupart, Youth Delegate.

Ms. Poupart (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): On the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, I have the privilege and pleasure to share with the General Assembly some of Canada's perspectives and policies on youth issues.

Since International Youth Year, 10 years ago, we have witnessed significant progress. More children now survive to become healthy adults: we have halved the rate of infant mortality, and we are on the verge of eradicating some of the diseases that most threaten children's health.

None the less, young people face challenges that did not exist 10 years ago. The world's population is currently growing by about 90 million annually, and between 1995 and 2015 approximately 1.847 billion additional children and young people will be added to the population of the Earth. This means there will be a dizzying increase in the number of young people in need of education, training, jobs and a future.

On top of that, we are living in a period of dramatic transformation in the world of work. Young people today are being called upon to adapt more rapidly than ever before to changes on political, economic and social fronts. Change has become our collective constant. This reality puts enormous pressure on young people the world over, who are expected to prepare for a future that even futurists are unable to foresee.

Canada considers that the international community must do more to respond to the needs of youth, particularly their special needs in making the transition from school to work. We must pay more attention to education and training for those who will be entering the work force in the next 20 to 30 years.

The Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Conference on Women all addressed very serious issues facing youth. In the coordinated follow-up to those Conferences, neither Governments nor the United Nations must forget the importance we attach to issues affecting young people. My country hopes that the Commission for Social Development will continue to play a key role in this regard and that it will provide a forum for addressing youth issues, that it will further the study of the situation of the young and, above all, that it will collect, synthesize and refine societal indicators of their situation.

(spoke in English)

Young people are the world's finest resource. We bring to life and to work ideas and energy, innovation and hope, dreams and ambitions. Countries, supported by the international community, must create an enabling environment in which we may meet our potential and participate in our countries' development. In particular there is a need to focus on the many barriers to full equality faced by young women.

If our hopes and dreams are betrayed, then we may see significant increases in poverty, unemployment and marginalization among the young, problems that can result in crime, substance abuse and domestic instability. We also recognize that far too many young people today die in wars or suffer as refugees or displaced persons.

In Canada, we recognize a responsibility to help guide young people through these turbulent times. But we realize that this is not something government can do alone. We are firm believers in the power of partnerships, convinced that it takes the commitment and cooperation of parents, educators, employers and young people to meet the challenge.

In Canada, our vision stems from the simple but profound philosophy that everyone should have safe homes and safe streets, full employment opportunities, and fair and equitable treatment at home, at school and on the job.

Canada believes it is essential that young people be able to become participants and contributors to society. In Canada we help equip young people with skills, and help open the doors to free and full participation by young people in our country's future.

(spoke in French)

The Government of Canada has initiated policies and instituted a series of youth initiatives aimed at empowering young Canadians to discover their own potential to be part of the solution, so they can face the future with confidence. Before establishing these programmes, the Government consulted extensively with youth. Based on that input, the Government developed its Youth Employment and Learning Strategy. Its main components include Youth Service Canada, Youth Internship Canada, Student Summer Job Action and the Canada Student Loans Programme.

We are also proud of our efforts to help youth at the international level. Canada initiated the World Youth Leadership Training Summit, held here at the United Nations last summer. That summit provided youth from around the world the chance to come together and to focus, as agents of change, on their responsibilities and goals. In this context, we will welcome enthusiastically new initiatives on youth within the United Nations system and on the part of the relevant institutions.

Canada endeavours to offer meaningful educational and work opportunities to young people so that they may contribute to the workplace, the community, our country and soon, we hope, to the United Nations. By engaging Canada's young people in learning and work experiences, we are forming solid citizens who will be able to work for our country's — and this planet's — future. We are developing the workforce necessary to meet the challenges of a global economy, and producing the next generation of national and international leaders, parents and citizens. At the root of that revolution are teenagers and young adults who are turning the tide, working for a better tomorrow.

This celebration of the world's youth is confirmation the revolution has begun. Building on this momentum — person by person, country by country — we will undoubtedly recreate our global community in a way that not only mirrors our own dreams and hopes, but achieves our vision for our youth and our future.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Permanent Representative of Peru, Mr. Guillén.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Over the last 10 years, the objectives of International Youth Year have not changed. However, owing to political, economic, social and cultural changes, the relevant needs and interests are now different.

My delegation is aware that the best way of celebrating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year would have been to adopt the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, a document being drafted through negotiations held within the framework of the Commission for Social Development and also through a Working Group of the Economic and Social Council. We believe that the adoption of this document should strengthen international commitment for its full implementation.

In Peru, 43 per cent of the population is made up of young people and children, and we therefore accord them a very special priority.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the priority areas identified by the international community in the draft Programme of Action that we hope soon to adopt coincide with the specific objectives, strategies and actions of the youth programme of the national plan for the population of Peru for the years 1991-1996.

That programme's general objective is to promote projects and comprehensive actions for Peruvian youth, mainly in the fields of responsible sexuality, education for peace, prevention of drug abuse, employment counselling and the creation of jobs.

In Peru, in order to achieve the general objective of the youth programme, the following three strategies have been considered, to be carried out with the active participation of young people: first, the establishment of a multisectoral, high-level commission made up of representatives of the public administration, of non-governmental organizations and of youth entrusted with the coordination, follow-up and evaluation of the national programme; secondly, priority actions directed at adolescents and young men and women in the poorest areas, who run the highest risk of violence and premature pregnancy; and, thirdly, encouraging the participation of youth organizations in fostering and carrying out programmes for youth, as well as the participation of non-governmental organizations in the development of projects for the prevention of sexual violence against children.

The specific objectives of Peru's youth programme are the following: first, to improve the sexual and reproductive health of youth and reduce the rate of pregnancy and maternal mortality among adolescents; secondly, to improve access to employment and income-generating opportunities for young people; thirdly, to promote the elaboration and execution of strategies to reduce and eliminate sexual violence against youth; fourthly, to promote the creation of youth organizations, which would make it possible for youths to be active in the policies and programmes that concern them; and, fifthly, to improve educational strategies and subject matter for youth. With regard to education, it is important not only to improve the level of basic education, literacy and technical and professional training, but also to promote mutual understanding and the ideals of peace and tolerance among youth.

In that connection, and on this particular occasion, when, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/244, we are commemorating the World Week of Peace, Peru would like to stress the need for States that have signed the Charter of the United Nations to recognize that promoting a culture of peace is part of the responsibility envisaged in it.

In this regard, States Members of the United Nations should, in our own countries, encourage the promotion of an education for peace, designed to foster among children and young people a spirit of peace, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding among nations.

In the future, an international society that has values such as the desire for peace, tolerance, solidarity and respect towards others will be better equipped for social development without barriers, which is something we all seek.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Mozambique, Mrs. Gustava.

Mrs. Gustava (Mozambique): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address this body as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. My delegation attaches great importance to this occasion and we wish, therefore, to express our sincere appreciation and pay homage to all those men and women dedicated to building a world of hope and prosperity for young people.

Needless to say, a better future for succeeding generations depends upon the resources a society can invest in its young people in all critical areas that lead to the sustained social development of mankind.

The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year is yet another golden opportunity for us to reflect and reaffirm our commitment to work together to seek common solutions to collective problems affecting young people throughout the world. The overwhelming presence here this week of Heads of State or Government and other important dignitaries who took part in the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations bears testimony to the firm determination of all nations of the world to work together in matters of mutual concern.

It is gratifying that these celebrations come after a series of important gatherings at the highest level which have taken place in recent years. In those gatherings important decisions have been made by the Commission for Social Development in critical areas identified as high priority in document E/CN.5/1995/9.

Indeed, it is clear in our minds that, if we are to succeed with the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, we will need to adopt and take stock of equally important declarations and programmes of action adopted at previous forums. We fully support the draft World Programme of Action. It is our view that this programme represents a backdrop for the improvement of the deteriorating situation of young people across the world. It provides the practical guidelines, as well as the mechanisms, to promote and improve the well-being and livelihood of youth.

The majority of the world's youth population lives in developing countries, and the fate of young people in many of those countries makes it even harder for them to build their future because of the limited opportunities for education, training for viable employment, access to health and social services, among other factors.

In this context, it is legitimate that priority should be given to those countries, by providing them with adequate resources to enable them to implement specific programmes related to youth. Both individual countries and the international community at large bear the responsibility of ensuring the removal of the root causes of social degradation affecting young people as a result of frustration and lack of encouragement to confront the challenges of their future.

Of particular concern, also, is the phenomenon of use of young people in armed conflicts. Indeed, my Government persistently denounced this practice during the conflict in Mozambique. Today, the consequences of war are enormous and the price stands high in terms of our ability to create the necessary conditions for the social reintegration of young people into civilian life.

Sixteen years of protracted war in Mozambique meant 16 years of economic and social disruption of the country with regard to health, education, employment and other related problems. As President Chissano said in his address at the Special Commemorative Meeting for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations:

> "The unflinching will of the Mozambican people to consolidate peace and democracy must be complemented by the creation of adequate conditions for rebuilding the socio-economic fabric severely affected by 16 years of war." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 40th meeting, p. 17)*

As President Chissano has said, the Government's Five-Year Programme addresses these challenges. The Programme is aimed at ensuring the consolidation of peace and stability, democracy, and national unity, reducing the levels of absolute poverty and improving the living standards of the people, with greater emphasis on education, health, rural development, promotion of employment and de-mining.

We are working closely with the international community in different areas of social integration with a view to creating jobs in rural areas where the majority of the young people live.

My Government is committed to pursuing these efforts, and we look forward to continued support from the international community for the success of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of China, Mr. Wang Xuexian.

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): It may be more appropriate for a young man than a grey-haired man like me to make this statement, but I also have reason to do so. First, I was once young. Second, I have always loved young people. I am deeply convinced of the irrefutable truth of what the late Chairman Mao Zedong said in those days to China's youth:

> "The world is yours as well as ours, but in the final analysis it is yours. You, the young people, in the prime of life and full of vitality, are like the rising morning sun at eight or nine o'clock. The hope is on you."

It is a major event in the field of youth that, at the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we are gathered here to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, to take stock of the United Nations' efforts in youth-related areas, to discuss important global programmes for the work of youth to the year 2000 and beyond, and to designate a date for International Youth Day. This demonstrates the great expectations of the international community from youth and the importance it attaches to the issue of youth. We would like to express our support and congratulations to this meeting.

The year 1985 was designated International Youth Year. Since then, great and profound changes have taken place on the international scene, and these changes have created good opportunities for promoting our efforts in the field of youth. The United Nations has done much useful work in pushing youth activities in a more pragmatic direction, and Member States have made great efforts centred on the theme of "participation, development and peace" as adopted for International Youth Year. The issue of youth has aroused increasing attention from the international community, activities aimed at solving social problems faced by youth have been on the rise, and efforts by different countries in this regard have made progress in varying degrees.

However, from a global point of view, the view of the issue of youth as marginal has not fundamentally changed. The extent of youth's participation in social, economic and cultural activities is far from satisfactory. In many countries and regions, social problems such as poor education, unemployment, disease, poverty, drug abuse and crime are multiplying. It is very disturbing that armed conflicts, natural disasters and social problems have driven large numbers of young people in certain regions to flee their homeland, thus worsening their living conditions. The issue of youth remains a weak link in the chain of the social development efforts of the United Nations. The treatment it receives is far from equal to other fields of social development, and falls far short of the demands of the international community. It is therefore necessary for the international community to make fresh efforts in the face of new situations and challenges.

At present, the gap between developed and developing countries in terms of wealth is widening. A vast number of developing countries are faced with a host of problems such as poverty, backwardness and lack of funds, which directly affect the development and participation of their young people. Young people in developing countries make up 80 per cent of the world's total. A good solution to the problems they face would give great impetus to overall progress on youth issues and contribute to the cause of global social development. The United Nations, and the international community as a whole, should therefore put the emphasis of their youth work on developing countries, attach due importance to the special difficulties and real needs of young people in developing countries and assist developing countries in carrying out positive and pragmatic youth programmes. The budget for youth activities within the United Nations system should be increased accordingly.

The Chinese Government has always supported and taken an active part in international activities in the field of youth. Ten years ago, the Chinese Government hosted the Friendly Gathering of Youth in the Asian and Pacific Region. This year, China presented to the United Nations posters for the tenth anniversary of International Youth

Year. Not long ago, the All-China Youth Federation successfully held in Beijing the East Asian Youth Leaders Conference. We also actively participated in the preparation of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond and have made vigorous efforts with other countries in refining the Programme.

We believe that the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which basically reflects the actual situation of current world youth affairs, is of positive significance to the development of world youth affairs beyond this century. Its adoption will help solve the problems faced by young people in various environments, create conditions for their full and effective participation in social development and decision-making in various countries, increase their access to education, health care and employment, protect them from the danger of drugs, encourage them to participate actively in environmental protection and other social activities, and promote mutual understanding and mutual respect among young people of different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds so that they can enjoy and cherish peace.

Therefore, the Chinese Government supports the adoption of the draft Programme of Action at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. We hope that all countries will take practical and effective measures earnestly and effectively to implement the Programme of Action in line with the actual conditions and needs of their young people, and will strengthen their cooperation and their exchanges in this regard. We also hope that the United Nations and the international community will play an active role in implementing the Programme of Action, promote and carry out the youth-related programmes of the United Nations system, strengthen coordination, expand technical cooperation, provide the necessary resources, and inject new vitality into global youth work so as to advance it to a new stage.

The Chinese Government has always attached importance to youth work and has formulated and implemented a series of policies concerning the protection and training of young people. There are explicit provisions concerning youth policy in China's Constitution and in relevant laws, the central purpose of which is to protect the rights and interests of young people, facilitate their development, and encourage them to take an active part in political, economic and social development. To protect the rights of minors, the Minors Protection Law of the People's Republic of China came into effect in January 1992. Accordingly, local governments throughout the country have also promulgated laws and regulations for the protection of minors. In recent years, the Chinese Government and youth organizations have carried out, in the light of China's actual conditions, a great variety of national and local activities focusing on the theme of going beyond the century such as the Youth Civilization Project Beyond the Century and the Youth Talents Project Beyond the Century. They have also formulated one theme of China's Agenda 21 programme: youth participation in sustainable development.

By participating actively in the nation's political, economic and social activities, young people in China have already become a very important force in national development. Their representatives are participating in decision-making in the Government and People's Congresses at all levels. In response to the poverty-relief activities advocated by the Government, young people in China have set up 10 million small farms, timberland centres, pastures, orchards and mills throughout the country. They have established the Youth Development Foundations of China, set up the first fund for assisting drop-outs to return to school in poverty-stricken areas, and taken an active part in environmental protection activities and in voluntary tree-planting and "Greenland" projects. Youth centres have also been established in accordance with the special characteristics and needs of young people. Now there are in China 40,000 youth homes, more than 1,100 youth palaces and more than 100 youth publications and periodicals. Psychological counselling centres have been set up in most universities, colleges and high schools. Rehabilitation centres have been established for the young disabled across the country, and cultural facilities for young people in China have been greatly improved.

China has about 600 million young people, who are its most valuable asset. China is shouldering the heavy responsibility of fostering a quarter of the world's young people. The Chinese Government will make further efforts in the field of youth, carry out, in light of its actual conditions, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, take an active part in United Nations activities in the field of youth, and strengthen its exchanges and cooperation with other countries so as to contribute to the sound development of global youth affairs.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs. Annette des Iles.

Mrs. des Iles (Trinidad and Tobago): Earlier this week, Heads of State and Government from around the world met in this Hall to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. They reflected on the activities of the United Nations since 1945 and spoke of their future aspirations for this noble Organization. It is significant that on the heels of this historic event, the General Assembly is convening to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, because the future of our world will be determined in large measure by the vision, hope and ideals of our young people, and the way in which the problems facing them are addressed.

There is no genius like the genius that resides in the energy and creativity of youth. Young people have the ability to make a dynamic and positive contribution in today's world. They will be the ones to succeed us, and to assume important decision-making positions in the years ahead. It is incumbent upon us, therefore, to invest judiciously and generously in today's young men and women, remembering that they constitute a significant group in the population of many of our countries. In my own country, for instance, young people represent no less than one sixth of the total population.

There are certain major areas of concern to youth worldwide. These include employment opportunities, education, health and the problems of drug abuse, crime and violence. These challenges are compounded when many young people feel marginalized or alienated, and excluded from important policy decisions affecting them.

Most countries, especially developing countries, face serious problems of unemployment and underemployment, and youth are among the most severely affected. In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, 75 per cent of the unemployed are young persons. The job market is also increasingly unable to employ youth at their levels of qualifications and skills, and they are likely to be engaged in work below their capability. This is a disconcerting situation because employment provides youth with the means to support themselves, a way of actively contributing to the economic development of their communities, and a means of obtaining a level of independence in the development of adult roles and responsibilities.

Trinidad and Tobago attaches the greatest priority to training and employment programmes for young people. In Trinidad and Tobago, such programmes include the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme and the Apprenticeship for Industrial Mobilization. The Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme comprises a Career Enhancement Project, a Vocational Skills Training Project and a Micro-Entrepreneurship Project. The common theme of the Programme is the overall training and self-development of youth to engender a transformation of their natural skills into an income-earning opportunity. The Apprenticeship for Industrial Mobilization utilizes on-the-job training techniques as a means of equipping young people.

Other approaches adopted by the Government to promote youth employment through training and retraining are: the use of youth camps, which offer a wide range of craft and secretarial courses; trade centres, which concentrate on the construction industry and skills related to house maintenance; and youth centres. The non-governmental organizations and the private sector are also involved in the provision of trade and skills training for young people.

Some other initiatives adopted in Trinidad and Tobago, geared to relieving youth unemployment, include the introduction in 1993 of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which offers temporary employment in projects related mainly to the improvement of the environment, as well as the Aided Self-Help Programme and the Small Business Management Programme, both designed to assist young entrepreneurs. More recently, the Agricultural Development Bank has opened a "youth window", offering soft loans and support services to young people interested in pursuing agriculture.

Trinidad and Tobago has a comprehensive education system but, as in many countries, its inability to provide students with the skills for the changing job market is a matter of concern. Another disturbing development is the deterioration in the performance of young men in the education system, with a growing incidence of drop-outs and functional illiteracy. These concerns were among the issues considered by a National Task Force on Education. The recommendations of the Task Force are being given serious consideration as Trinidad and Tobago attempts to reform the education system to meet today's needs. The crucial role of education in the development process and the growth of individuals, especially young people, forms a cornerstone in attempts to restructure the education system.

Another critical basic need is good health. Key health issues affecting youth include malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancies, narcotic and psychotropic drug abuse, misuse of alcohol and tobacco, and psychological and mental disorders. A most disconcerting development is the high increase of young people suffering from HIV/AIDS. The World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS states that 50 per cent of HIV infections occur in people aged 15 to 24 and about one fifth of all people who have AIDS are in their twenties. Male youth in the Caribbean are also at high risk due to HIV infection, and AIDS is now a leading cause of death among young men in the region.

Another area in need of urgent attention is widespread drug abuse and drug trafficking and the increase in alcohol consumption and tobacco use among young people. Demand reduction programmes for drugs, tobacco and alcohol need to target more on youth. The drug problem is particularly serious because there is a marked correlation between the increase in drug abuse and violent crimes. In the Caribbean, the typical offender and victim of drug-related violent crimes is the young working-class male.

In Trinidad and Tobago the National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Programme coordinates drug abuse prevention initiatives and fosters and facilitates the efforts of several non-governmental organizations involved in the struggle against drug abuse. A central element of its programme is focused on youth, both in and out of the school system. The Prevention Programme is also involved in treatment and rehabilitation.

Another growing phenomenon that is engaging the attention of policy-makers in the Caribbean is the emergence of street children and the incidence of homelessness among young people. Some of the factors contributing to this development are the deterioration in socio-economic conditions and the effects of drug addiction. The erosion in the family structure and value systems, and the lack of proper role models, are also factors that must be given attention in considering these and other related needs and problems of youth.

I now wish to turn briefly to the issue of institutional arrangements. In Trinidad and Tobago, there exists a wide cross-section of voluntary organizations whose aim is to assist young people in their development. There is an active Youth Affairs Division located in the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, and its vision is to foster an environment for the development of youth. It is also recognized that there needs to be an integrated approach to youth policy and that young people must be part of the consultation and decision-making process.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the need to rationalize its youth development thrust, and a comprehensive study on the present situation of youth in Trinidad and Tobago has been commissioned. This study will look at the nature and magnitude of the social problems, attitudes, behaviour and perspectives of young people and present a profile of the country's youth.

With respect to regional cooperation on youth affairs, the Caribbean Centre of the Commonwealth Youth Programme plays a crucial role in coordinating regional policies and programmes. Its activities include youth exchanges, training and seminars. An important tenet of the Commonwealth Youth Programme is to work towards developing a society where young men and women are empowered to develop their potential, creativity and skills. In May this year, a successful meeting of Commonwealth Youth Ministers was held in Trinidad and Tobago. The activities of the United Nations, through its regional commissions, are also extremely useful. In this connection, I wish to make special mention of the meeting held in Chile in September 1991, at which a joint declaration of United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations on policies relating to youth in Latin America and the Caribbean was adopted.

Trinidad and Tobago also wishes to commend the efforts of the United Nations in formulating an international policy on youth, with emphasis on the important themes of participation, development and peace. The adoption and implementation of the proposed World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond will be another significant step forward in helping to address effectively the challenges facing our youth, so as to enhance their participation in and their contribution to society. My delegation places particular emphasis on the recognition, in the draft World Programme of Action, of the essential role of international cooperation, especially as it relates to international technical assistance and advisory services. There must be concerted action by the international community in order to ensure the success of the World Programme.

Young people constitute a major human resource. They are the parents and leaders of tomorrow and a significant force in the economic, political and social development of our countries. It is our responsibility to work with them to ensure a better world for our own generation and for generations to come. They deserve nothing less.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Paraguay, Mr. Enrique Riera Escudero, Deputy Minister for Youth.

Mr. Riera Escudero (Paraguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Republic of Paraguay, which has a long history of authoritarian Governments, has enjoyed full civil and political freedoms for more than six years now, as part of a democratic process which, slowly but surely, is being consolidated and strengthened, with the consensus of a noble, peace-loving and hard-working people that makes daily sacrifices in order to build a better future for its children.

In these first few years the democratic Government has devoted its best efforts to restoring rights that were infringed for three decades and to restructuring the branches of Government, whose balance and interdependence were established in the new national Constitution, which has been in force since 1992.

At the same time, we have created constitutional mechanisms to monitor public affairs. In addition to the unconditional reinstatement of freedom of the press, the National Congress has regained its indispensable autonomy and the power to balance the activities of the executive branch through the office of the Comptroller-General of the Republic, the Ombudsman and bicameral investigative commissions, which have yielded important results in terms of administrative transparency.

Finally, we have established the new Supreme Court of Justice — which is appointing new judges in every jurisdiction of the country — thus completing the restructuring of the third and last branch of government awaiting restoration in this democratic process. Within this legal-political framework, built on the basis of an established timetable, we can say with conviction that the process of democratization in Paraguay is irreversible.

However, despite progress in the political sphere, the democratic system has revealed major economic and social shortcomings as a result of the freedoms that we are enjoying. Nowadays the national Government takes a responsible approach to the structural imbalances in our economy, which created serious social problems that were not given institutional attention for a long time. We come from a State-controlled and overprotective economic system, which, with its paternalistic attitudes and vexatious favouritism, gave rise to unjust inequalities in terms of access to opportunities for personal advancement and in the development of our national economy.

Our present approach to a social market-economy system has made possible the creation of a climate of competence, with equal opportunities, aimed at the sustainable development of the country with social equity in order to make us more efficient and competitive regionally, in the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), and internationally, with the rest of the world.

In this context, a country like ours, where 70 per cent of the population are under 35 years of age and half the people are under 20, has a great future. The Vice-Ministry of Youth, one year after its establishment as a branch of the Ministry of Education and Worship, submitted the first national youth plan, entitled "The Country We Want". The process of drafting this plan was eminently participatory, more than 2,500 youth leaders from all political parties, religious youth organizations, student organizations, trade and labour unions and sports organizations having been brought together through the regional consultative forums that were held in the departments in the interior of the Republic.

In that plan, which was submitted to the President of the Republic on 21 September this year — Youth Day — youth is regarded as "the primary strategic human resource" because young people assimilate new technology more easily, have initiative and are more able to adapt to change with the speed and thoroughness required in our times.

These thousands of Paraguayan young people, who have been living in democracy for more than six years, realize that they are no longer a problem but, rather, our country's solution. But we need to invest in them, not by adopting the mistaken and outdated approach of offering them only frivolities or superficial things, such as sports or entertainment, but by offering them serious opportunities for their complete development and solutions for their fundamental problems, such as work, education and health, as well as addressing other, equally important questions, such as drugs, AIDS, tobacco and alcohol. We are committed to ensuring that youth, representing the present and future of Paraguay, will as soon as possible become part of our democratic process and of the socio-economic development of the country, for the benefit of our people.

The President returned to the Chair.

In addition, we pledge, in this historic Hall, to work intensively to achieve with them an international world that is more peaceful, integrated and united and whose countries pool their efforts, not only because they need each other but also because they have a sincere appreciation of each other's peoples, languages, customs and ideas. Through the exchange of human, scientific and economic resources, we can all help each other in solving the problems of our people and our peoples, which is the supreme and ultimate goal of our efforts.

Today it is no longer possible to imagine a world of isolation, with countries and leaders insensitive to the major problems of mankind, distant from others, walled off by silence, sterile confrontation or the wasteful use of resources for destruction rather than construction. Young people are and in human history will always constitute a vanguard and an inexhaustible moral reserve.

The generation that enters the year 2000 faced with a perceptible crisis of ethical and moral values must renew with more vigour than ever its commitment to society, guided always by its convictions and never by considerations of convenience, respecting human rights and struggling with all its force for the perennial principles of justice, freedom and equality for all.

Let us never abandon these ideals, which are like stars that we may never attain but must never lose sight of in order not to stray from our path.

I wish to conclude with a thought that sums up our vision of the mission of the men and women who live on this beautiful planet: we did not inherit this Earth from our parents; we have it on loan from our children.

The President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Australia has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of that delegation in the list of speakers?

I see no objection. Australia is therefore included in the list.

I should like again to remind all representatives that we have a long list of speakers. Owing to the serious financial situation of the United Nations, the afternoon meeting has to adjourn at 6 p.m. I therefore appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief so that all participants, some of whom have come from far away for these meetings, may be able to speak today within the time allocated to these meetings.

I now call on the representative of India, Ms. Murugesan.

Ms. Murugesan (India): The global youth population numbers more than a billion, of which more than 80 per cent are in the developing countries. While this is a message of hope, it is also a challenge. Developing countries today face poverty, population growth, inadequate shelter and housing, and weakening of support systems. India, like many other countries, has to confront these problems by focusing on the potential of youth and devising ways to exploit this through social and economic restructuring and the creation of appropriate social and Government mechanisms.

The proposed United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the adoption of which we support, focuses on 10 critical areas of concern, among them education, employment, poverty, environment, juvenile delinquency and participation in societal decision-making. Special attention is needed to address the concerns of girls and young women. The draft Programme is ambitious, and could provide guidelines or useful inputs for governmental action on youth affairs.

The Government of India has instituted a department at the national level to coordinate youth affairs under its Ministry for Human Resource Development. A number of programmes have been devised to appropriately channel youth energies, and to train the young at all stages. The scheme of national *yuva kendras*, or youth centres, which came into operation in 1972, was aimed at focusing on the employment capabilities of rural youth. These youth centres organize leadership training programmes and social services.

The National Service Scheme is another programme which is aimed at involving university and high school students in rural reconstruction activities to assist the weaker sections of society. These students are also involved in the promotion of national family welfare programmes and the national literacy mission. Besides this, cultural exchanges are arranged between students from various parts of the country and foreign students. The Government provides free primary education throughout the country and, at the higher levels, finances the education of meritorious students from the weaker sections of the society in addition to subsidizing such higher education for the rest of society.

India also has perhaps one of the largest affirmative action programmes aimed at the upliftment of women and the weaker sections of society.

In the decade between 1985 and 1995, the global social picture has changed. Young people are today faced with tougher choices, fewer opportunities, particularly in the developing countries, and are exposed to societies increasingly succumbing to drugs, AIDS and street crime. The United Nations proposal to improve the situation of youth through concerted action aimed at enhancing youth programmes and their implementation and evaluation at all levels needs all-round support.

The family is the basic building block of society. Good family values have been able to curtail tension, conflict, crime and violence in society, particularly in the young, and have protected, to a large degree, the rights and safety of children, engendered a sound social compact and responsibility, and directly contributed to the internal peace, growth, stability and harmony of society. It is of paramount importance that United Nations activities on human rights education should draw upon the best of successful family traditions and values from all societies, from both the East and the West, and promote them around the globe in the interest of more peaceful societies, and the preservation of human rights and social values for all mankind. Individuals as they grow up must realize that they not only have rights in society, but responsibilities to society as well, and to the global family as a whole, as reflected in the ancient Indian concept of *vasudeva kudumbakkam*, which means that the world is but one family.

For all, particularly young people, the family is the first resource and last resort. It is, however, unfortunate that families today are experiencing socio-economic changes that challenge their very structure, and the multigenerational relationships that they nurture. It is vital for the continuing stability of societies that communications between the younger and the older generations must continue. The Orient continues the tradition of the young caring for the old in the same manner that they had been cared for from their infancy. The aged, whose numbers are increasing, need special attention from the younger generations who have matured under their nourishing care.

The Declaration of Intent on Youth, part I of the draft World Programme of Action, calls upon Governments to provide opportunities for education for the young and productive employment; it also underlines the responsibility of Governments for guaranteeing to the young full enjoyment of all human rights; to take necessary steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls and, above all, to foster in their own societies respect and tolerance among young people for all cultures and religions. The draft Declaration of Intent and the Programme of Action as a whole, which focus on measures to strengthen national capabilities in the field of youth, provide practical guidelines for national policies on youth with international support.

The President: I now call on the representative of Mongolia, Mr. Tserenchimidiin Zorigtbaatar, Foreign Relations Secretary of the Mongolian Youth Federation.

Mr. Zorigtbaatar (Mongolia): It is a great honour for me to represent the youth of Mongolia at this special plenary meeting of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

It is especially opportune that this occasion should fall shortly after the solemn commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This august Hall still holds in the air the unreserved commitment and unfailing faith of the world's leaders to the United Nations of tomorrow. To make tomorrow brighter we, the youth of the world, have to shoulder greater responsibility and exercise a stronger voice, commensurate to the challenges ahead. In this regard, we believe that the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which we hope will be adopted at the end of our deliberations today, will undoubtedly provide the sound policy framework and practical guidelines for national and international action to improve the situation of young people and enhance their participation in society. It is heartening to see that the draft Programme is built upon the important outcome and experience generated at the recent global Conferences held in Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing.

Various problems faced by society are more acutely felt by its young members, since they constitute, by and large, the most vulnerable and marginalized group. This is even more the case for a country like Mongolia, where the young under 35 make up 75 per cent of the entire population. The 1990 wind of change has brought political pluralism and economic liberalization, along with an outbreak of such ills as poverty, unemployment, social disintegration and erosion of the societal fabric. Young people found themselves among the most vulnerable sector of society, prey to the web of juvenile crime and the phenomena of street children and school drop-outs, illiteracy, unemployment and underemployment and tobacco and alcohol addiction.

The Government of Mongolia, in cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations, is taking energetic measures to redress and improve the situation of young people. They include, *inter alia*, the organization of short- and long-term training and skill-training for income-generation by young people, thus helping create opportunities for self-employment for the poorer and weaker, and the adoption of policies discouraging tobacco and alcohol use, especially among children.

This year's autumn session of the Mongolian Parliament will consider a draft single youth law aimed at protecting the rights of the young people and ensuring their full participation in the life of society.

The Mongolian Youth Federation, an umbrella organization comprising 12 local organizations and movements with 80,000 members, with grass-roots representation in every administrative unit throughout the country, closely cooperates with the Government and other relevant non-governmental organizations on youth-related issues. The Federation, together with the Labour and Population Policy Ministry, has submitted for the consideration of the Government a draft comprehensive plan of action on youth to the year 2000 and beyond, whose implementation will, we hope, start at the beginning of the next year.

Let me briefly touch on some of the pressing problems facing Mongolian youth today.

First, as in society at large, youth education finds itself in a critical situation. Growing numbers of school drop-outs turn tomorrow's teenagers into illiterates. On the other hand, many of those young people who managed to graduate from high school are unable to pay for their higher education tuition, thus joining the ranks of the unemployed. Therefore, increased attention and greater efforts are needed to provide basic education to the illiterates in the first group and skill-training to those who are functionally illiterate.

The Mongolian Youth Federation, with the support of the European Union, has begun implementation of a two-year project designed to help young single mothers/heads of households, to provide street children with medical care and basic social services, and functionally illiterate youth with skill-training.

Secondly, the poor and low-income young people unable to participate in the health insurance system do not receive any medical care or aid. In this respect, we are focusing our efforts on publicizing preventive measures, disseminating primary health knowledge and practices among a wider circle of youth.

The Mongolian Youth Federation is a full-fledged member of the World Assembly of Youth, the Asian Youth Council and the World Federation of Democratic Youth. We maintain close cooperation with sister organizations in more than 40 countries around the world.

We feel proud that at the initiative of our Federation a strong youth campaign for the protection of the environment has been launched in Ulan Bator as an outcome of the "Wild Nature" workshop held in August 1994 with the participation of youth representatives from 11 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. It is gratifying to note that this Ulan Bator initiative for the preservation of wild nature for succeeding generations has been and will be further manifested in Singapore and Thailand respectively.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the determination of Mongolian young people to collaborate with their sisters and brothers around the world to implement the World Youth Programme to the full.

The President: I now call on the representative of Jamaica, Ms. Cheryl Gordon, Youth Representative.

Ms. Gordon (Jamaica): Ten years ago the United Nations, recognizing the need for international attention to be focused on the situation of the world's youth, particularly their increasing problems, designated 1985 as International Youth Year, with "Participation, Development, Peace" as its theme. The objectives of that special Year were to enhance awareness of the needs and aspirations of youth; to make youth activities an integral part of social and economic development; to enhance youth participation in society; and to promote among youth the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among people.

In accordance with these objectives, an International Youth Conference and World Youth Festival was convened in 1985 in Kingston, Jamaica, and was attended by over 1,000 youth leaders from some 100 countries. Adopted at that Conference was the Kingston Declaration of Principles, in which the youth leaders reaffirmed their adherence to freedom, justice and the democratic way of life. It is significant that in the era of the cold war, when ideology split the nations of the world into hostile camps, the youth of this same world made their voices heard in support of world peace, in keeping with the United Nations theme for 1985.

Another highlight of the Year was the General Assembly's endorsement of guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. These guidelines contained suggestions on how countries could develop and implement youth policies and programmes according to the needs and situation of each country.

Ten years later, many of the youths of 1985 have grown up. Ten years later, the cold war, thankfully, is over, and so the peoples of the world are no longer divided to such a large extent by ideology. This creates a wonderful opportunity for young people from different parts of the world to have greater interaction with one another, sharing experiences and solutions to common problems. And the world's youths, ever alert, are taking advantage of this opportunity.

The end of the cold war has also redirected global attention to the issue of social development. The link between peace and development has been recognized by the United Nations, which has convened six global conferences since 1990 on themes related to human rights and economic and social development. This concept was recently underscored by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Right Honourable P. J. Patterson. Speaking earlier this year at the World Summit for Social Development, in Copenhagen, he stated,

> "there can be no lasting and universal peace until we forge that new global partnership that eradicates the scourge of poverty, provides adequate shelter, combats illiteracy, malnutrition and drug addiction, affords adequate health security and halts human exploitation".

These problems, which besiege humanity in general, affect youth to an even greater extent. Many of the problems and interests that had been identified as urgent have multiplied in size, scope and intensity. A new "mid-generation" of youth calls for our attention to the same problems and concerns as beset its predecessors. Jamaica is therefore very pleased that the General Assembly has devoted its attention at this year's historic session to stirring the international community to renewed action in order to ensure that the problems and concerns affecting our youth are properly addressed.

Jamaica has always been actively involved in youth activities at the regional and international levels. In 1985 we were honoured to be one of 24 countries selected to come up with a document directed towards proposing solutions for some of the problems of the world's youth. That document was the forerunner of the current draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, which Jamaica hopes will be adopted during these plenary meetings. At the national level, our youth, like that of other countries, has been the agent and catalyst of social and political change, notably, but not solely, through artistic expression. Jamaican youth delegates participated extensively in two of the Preparatory Committee meetings for the World Summit for Social Development and in a number of activities held earlier this year in honour of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. Jamaica fully endorsed General Assembly resolution 49/152, of December 1994, and in keeping with this commitment, has included representatives from eight governmental and non-governmental organizations in its official delegation to take part in this historic session of the General Assembly. Jamaica's active participation in youth discussions at the international level has born fruit: we were among the first countries to implement a national youth policy, which mirrors the draft World Programme of Action for Youth in many respects.

The draft Programme of Action outlines the issues confronting today's youth, which include education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, recreation and leisure and rights and responsibilities. These concerns are similarly reflected in Jamaica's National Youth Policy, which identifies eight major issues facing our youth. These include the effects of cultural penetration and rising materialism, alienation and lack of recognition and health-related problems.

The draft document also suggests strategies for addressing these issues. With respect to education, the draft Programme proposes to address deficiencies in the education of youth through, for example, improvements in vocational and professional training and access to apprenticeship programmes. In addition, Governments should establish or strengthen programmes to educate young people about the cultural heritage of their societies.

Similar measures contained in Jamaica's National Youth Policy include an increased emphasis, within educational programmes, on Jamaican culture and heritage, an expansion of our apprenticeship programme and a review of school curricula to ensure that subjects taught are relevant to the requirements of the job market.

Most importantly, Jamaica has this year reintroduced its National Youth Service, which will have very strong components of leadership training and remedial education. The draft Programme also suggests the promotion of self-employment schemes for youth with funding and technical support from Governments and private-sector bodies. Also suggested are cooperative schemes in which young people could be involved in the production and marketing of goods and services. In accordance with our National Youth Policy, Jamaica will be developing model youth-run cooperatives that will include guidelines for management training in entrepreneurial techniques. Similar programmes already exist within the secondary school system.

In the area of agriculture, the draft Programme states that Governments should provide land grants to youth and youth organizations. In line with this renewed focus on agriculture, the Jamaican Government will embark on a major promotion scheme to encourage young people to take up agricultural careers, and to facilitate their doing so, by providing special access to land, capital and technical assistance.

In the area of health, Jamaica's National Policy is geared towards the promotion of health education to encourage positive values and attitudes among our youth. This includes a focus on preventive action as well as programmes designed to instruct youth in parenting skills and responsibilities, health education and family-life education. Teenage fathers and mothers will be specially targeted. Already operating in Jamaica there are programmes designed to assist teenage girls whose education has been interrupted by pregnancy. Many of these programmes also provide counselling for teenage fathers and the parents of teenage mothers.

In the area of drug abuse, Jamaica will target youth organizations as key players in designing and implementing programmes to help reintegrate young people into the community, which we consider to be the best protection against potential drug abuse. Treatment and rehabilitation programmes for young substance abusers will also make use of peer group pressure in a positive way, as young people can participate in therapy sessions for substance abusers.

In line with International Youth Year's theme of participation, Jamaica's youth-leadership programme will also be expanded to enable young people to be effectively represented in decision-making and implementation activities taking place in society. Young people are especially concerned about the preservation of the environment and the increasing use of violence to resolve conflicts.

If I have focused overwhelmingly on problems affecting young people in my country, it is precisely because these are the issues that Jamaican youths have themselves repeatedly emphasized as their major concerns and that they need to see properly addressed. Although various national programmes have been implemented in the past — aimed at skills, training and self-help, among other things — these have had only a limited impact. The truth is that the institutional framework for addressing youth-related problems and issues in Jamaica has been inadequate, with limited coordination and interaction between the various youth organizations, both governmental and non-governmental. This has led to duplication of services, a waste of resources and piecemeal solutions. In addition, there was no officially approved policy on youth to guide agencies so that they would act in accordance with a common set of strategies or towards common goals.

Jamaica's national youth policy was therefore designed to redress all these deficiencies, but first of all to bring an integrated approach to the activities of youth organizations nation wide and to equip all youth with the necessary academic, technical and life-coping skills to foster their personal development. The policy is the product of extensive consultation, participation and discussion involving a wide cross-section of youth-related organizations and groups across Jamaica, both governmental and non-governmental.

We have also strengthened our Youth Division, located in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, to be the focal point for the implementation of our youth policy, coordinating the various youth programmes through collaboration with Government and non-governmental youth organizations. The policy is not intended to be either static or cast in stone. Consultations towards improving and updating its strategies and their effective implementation will continue to be sought.

As is clear, the policy I have just outlined is, certainly from the point of view of my own country, an extremely ambitious one. It not only comprises new and creative measures to address the needs and aspirations of our youth, but also seeks to reintroduce and reinvigorate traditional and past programmes and practices of previous generations.

Aside from the already present political will and commitment on the part of Governments, financial and technical assistance, as well as advice, are needed if programmes such as those I have outlined are to succeed and to remain on track. In the specific case of Jamaica, the Government has identified, for necessary international assistance, priority measures concerning the establishment of the appropriate institutional structure, the establishment of a database on youth in Jamaica, and the expansion of our National Youth Service. In this respect, United Nations help will be sought to provide technical assistance for consultants, training, attachments, study, visits, equipment, and funds for feasibility studies and pilot projects. More creative means of assistance could be devised to assist youth, which would involve more funds being made available by Governments on a voluntary basis, but which could also involve the provision of non-monetary assistance, such as technical assistance and advice. We as Governments have to remember that youth are not patient. Their concerns and solutions to the problems that affect them cannot be put on hold, pending discussion and bureaucratic red tape, as these concerns and problems often develop and explode at a remarkable pace.

Although the situation of youth differs from one country to another, we believe that young people world wide would benefit from an increased exchange of ideas among themselves and among Governments and Government agencies responsible for youth, on similar questions relating to their young people.

Jamaica, as one of the countries intimately involved in the formulation of the document before the Assembly, fully endorses it and urges fellow Member States to do the same. Of course all the measures contained in the draft Programme of Action will not be fully applicable to all our countries; that is illogical. During the negotiations on the final draft these past three weeks, differences in culture and style again made it obvious that the document could not adopt a blanket approach to concerns facing the world's youth. But then, that was never the intention.

The intention of elaborating this draft Programme of Action was to provide a basic — I repeat, basic — guideline for Governments to consult when designing their youth policies or programmes. This was also in the hope that the attention of the world community would be refocused on the question of youth. Jamaica has designed its youth policy to suit the needs and aspirations of Jamaica's youth, and even these will change in time. Other countries have also formulated, either recently or long ago, youth policies or their equivalents, without feeling constrained by United Nations formulation.

We need to ensure that the cries of our young people are heard and, more importantly, are acted upon at the national, regional and international levels. As we live in an increasingly interdependent world, our youth, more than ever before, are cosmopolitan creatures, and it is only logical that we should follow their example in our approach to the question of international youth policy.

At present, there is national, regional and international consensus on the need for youth to be at the top of national priorities, as other problems and issues that concern Governments now will be left to future Governments to sort out. And since the nations of the future will be inhabited by the youth of today, what better way to ensure their future than to lay the proper foundations — with our youth, for our youth.

The President: I call on the representative of Uganda, Mr. Mukasa-Ssali.

Mr. Mukasa-Ssali (Uganda): During the recent Special Commemorative Meeting on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, social development was one of the subjects highlighted by many Heads of State or Government. It was also the subject of the United Nations World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, which included a specific component on the situation of youth. Indeed, Copenhagen was an important landmark in the evolution of our perception of development. We agreed that development should no longer be defined merely in economic terms but must be people-centred, and that, equally, comprehensive development was no longer a matter of benign charity or of attentive discretion. It is an obligation cast upon all Member States, developed and developing alike.

In the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, a set of measures was agreed on to reverse the deteriorating social situation world wide. As we commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, those measures should be embarked upon without any further delay. But most important is the need to react to critical situations rapidly and appropriately. In this respect, the socio-economic situation in developed countries, and in particular in the least developed countries and in sub-Saharan Africa, leaves no doubt about the need for urgent action. It is in those countries that we find rampant deprivation and social dislocation of youth as a result of famine, disease inadequate shelter, unsafe water, the lowest standards of basic education and generalized impoverishment.

Youth are the vanguard of the future. It is in their hands that we shall place today's achievements. Unfortunately, the condition of children, like that of their parents, in a number of countries — especially those of Africa — remains critical due to socio-economic factors and to various forms of neglect, violence and exploitation, and to armed conflict, demographic growth, environmental degradation and the scourge of diseases and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS.

Indeed, praiseworthy efforts are being made by Member States to launch and implement national plans of action in the context of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s. Those efforts need augmentation. My delegation therefore calls upon the international community, the United Nations institutions concerned, financial institutions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to increase the mobilization of resources in order to achieve the Decade's goals, within the framework of the promotion of genuine partnerships to improve the international economic environment and guarantee survival and meaningful development for children.

Debt is a phenomenon that deserves special mention. Persistent debt burden affords most of our countries no opportunity adequately to plan and prepare for the future — and this is the future that will be in the hands of today's youth. In the final analysis, therefore, debt calls for bold once-and-for-all development-oriented action involving all types of debts, including total write-offs, the provision of more concessional resources, and other innovative measures.

In the developed countries, there are social security arrangements like homes and specialized institutions for special social groups such as the aged and the disabled. These are rarely existent in most African countries, though they are occasionally found in urban centres, but even then cover an insignificant number of the special social groups. The main social security for the aged and the disabled has traditionally been the family. But, with increasing poverty, even this crude safety net can no longer be provided. It thus becomes appropriate that any measures to address the special needs of the aged and the disabled in our countries should have a bearing on the general well-being of the family, which again can be fostered by the creation of an enabling environment for growth and improvement in family incomes. Moreover, arrangements like "homes" are generally shunned, as in my own country, in addition to the difficulty of sustaining them adequately in weak economies. Of course, institutions that give training in specialized skills and adaptability, especially in the case of disabled children, will continue to play an important role in the overall integration of those special social groups.

Successful arrangements for social development are built on the strength of family units. Weak families resulting from economic impoverishment may be a source of larger dislocation and conflicts in social set-ups. In fact, conflicts can be traced to socioeconomic inequalities. Action should therefore be targeted at bridging socio-economic gaps by such measures as those aimed at raising incomes of the most vulnerable societies, so that the bare minimum requirements of life, such as food, health, education and shelter — are assured. This is the challenge to all of us, the United Nations system, the multilateral institutions and other actors in the development field.

Lastly, a working group under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council was set up to prepare a draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Negotiations have been going on, but not without difficulties. In the view of my delegation, the Programme of Action that is adopted by this Assembly should be in the interests of the youth, taking into account the cultural and social diversities of all Member States.

The President: I would like to appeal again to all speakers to keep their statements as brief as possible.

I now call on the representative of Singapore, Mr. Seng.

Mr. Seng (Singapore): The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, which we are observing here today, is an opportunity for us collectively to take stock of past achievements and think about future directions regarding the situation of youth.

International Youth Year has made two important contributions. First, it has succeeded in raising awareness among the public and decision makers throughout the world regarding the situation of youth. This is important, because in 1995 the world youth population is estimated to number 1.03 billion, or 18 per cent of the total world population. This figure is expected to grow in the coming years, especially in the developing countries. Besides their numerical significance, youth in all countries represent a major human resource for economic development. They are also the building blocks of their societies. It is often said that the youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. Therefore, it is important that International Youth Year has succeeded in giving priority to youth issues in the national agendas of many countries.

Second, International Youth Year was also instrumental in laying the foundation for what is to become the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The three themes of International Youth Year, which are "participation, development, and peace", provided the starting point for the draft Programme of Action. Much time and effort have gone into its preparation. As a forward-looking document, it can serve as a useful guide for countries to plan and develop their national programmes. It is also a recognition by the international community that the hopes, needs and concerns of youth deserve attention at the national and international level.

Singapore joins the international community in celebrating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. The National Youth Council of Singapore has organized a wide range of activities to commemorate the occasion. The activities have included an Asian Regional Youth Conference on the Environment; the International Scouts Conference; and a special commemorative issue of Statistics on Youth that will trace the development of Singaporean youth in the past decade. To help publicize this wide array of activities, a special package has been produced for distribution to schools and youth groups in Singapore. Today I am pleased to be able to share this package with delegates.

In Singapore, the National Youth Council is the Government agency which makes youth its main focus. It looks at policies, programmes and activities from the perspective of youth. It serves as the focal point for discussions or debates on youth matters and acts as a catalyst to initiate new programmes and activities. It also coordinates programmes nationwide so that duplication and overlap are minimized. Finally, the National Youth Council provides communication channels for the youth to express their views and opinions on current issues.

It has been 10 years since the first International Youth Year was celebrated in 1985. Today's youth live in quite a different world from that of 10 years ago. In particular, there are two trends which I would like to address. First, since the end of the cold war we have witnessed a resurgence in ethnic-religious conflicts in many parts of the world. Far from being extinguished, primordial forces remain very strong.

In a multiracial and multireligious society such as Singapore, we have to be vigilant against ethnic and religious chauvinism. Therefore, mutual understanding and tolerance among people of different social, racial and religious backgrounds are encouraged. In Singapore, compulsory national service in the military, police force or civil defence authorities has played an extremely important role in forging common links, fostering shared values and a sense of nationhood among young people from diverse backgrounds. During national service, young men at the age of 18, regardless of race, religion, or social and economic background, spend between two and two and a half years living and working together. Thereafter, they serve in the reserve for a further 20 to 30 years, meeting regularly. In the process, they learn not only how to defend the country, but also how to live harmoniously with each other.

There are also a variety of youth organizations in Singapore which bring together young people from different races and backgrounds. The biggest of these is the People's Association Youth Movement which has 81 branches and more than 100,000 members. The Singapore Government actively supports the activities of youth organizations in Singapore to bring young people together to participate in meaningful activities. An example is the Youth Development Fund, which was established in 1993 with a S$3 million endowment fund to promote youth projects which benefit society. More than 20 projects have been carried out under the sponsorship of the Youth Development Fund. They span a wide spectrum, ranging from environmental projects to organizing concerts for the disabled.

A second project is Project E, which stands for "explore, endeavour, experience and expedition". It was also launched in 1993 with a S$5.2 million grant from the Government to encourage youth to venture beyond Singapore and to participate in outdoor activities. To date, more than 600 overseas expeditions and adventure programmes involving more than 12,000 participants have been organized. By providing channels for youth from different backgrounds to participate together in worthy and meaningful activities, we hope that the youth of Singapore will learn mutual understanding and religious tolerance.

The last 10 years have also witnessed significant advances in information technology. Besides television and other forms of mass media, the revolution in electronic multimedia will have a significant impact on how young people acquire their knowledge, values and modes of behaviour. Increasingly, we are living in a borderless world where resources, ideas and information move freely, very often through cyberspace. The Internet, in particular, will become a powerful influence on youth. The Internet now has over 30 million subscribers and attracts more than a million new ones every month. While the Internet is invaluable as a global network for the exchange of information, it is also open to abuse. For example, most of us will have read about how paedophiles have established their own meeting corner on the Internet. There are also worrying reports of youth gaining access to pornography on the Internet.

We could respond to the problem in two ways. One would be to avoid the problem by restricting young people's access to the Internet. However, this is both impractical and untenable. Such a response would be tantamount to throwing away the baby with the bath water. Another way is to educate youth on the healthy use of the Internet. In Singapore, the National Youth Council has chosen the latter course. It has introduced two electronic communication programmes. One is called Talkshop Café, which is an electronic forum page for young people to share their views on current topics. The second is called InfoYouth which puts together under one roof all the information on youth organizations, programmes and activities in Singapore.

In Singapore, we regard young people as an important asset of our society. The youth of today are the leaders who will take Singapore into the next century. Countries which ignore their young people do so at their own peril. The concerns of youth deserve our attention. The needs of youth deserve our investment. The hopes of youth deserve our encouragement.

The President: I now call on the representative of Malta, Mr. John M. Demanuele, the Director for Youth Affairs, Ministry for Justice and the Arts.

Mr. Demanuele (Malta): In increasing the effectiveness of development policies and implementation programmes, it is vital that young people and their potential contribution to development remain high on the agenda of Governments. Since national situations vary, policies and programmes for youth should be tuned to meet the exigencies of the country in question within the parameters set by United Nations guidelines.

Recognizing the role and needs of young people, the United Nations has spurred Member States into paying increased attention to youth and their vital contribution to development aspirations. Declaring 1985 as International Youth Year was meant to set the mark on programmes and policies to elevate the status of young people through appropriate Government action as well as increased participation by youth non-governmental organizations in the process of co-management and decision-making.

That year brought together our national organizations concerned with youth matters under the umbrella of the National Committee for the International Youth Year and more importantly provided the opportunity to realize the need for coordinated efforts in the development of youth programmes.

Today, 10 years later, we live in a world of continuous change. The old continent of Europe is shaping a new image thanks to the action of institutions such as the European Union and the Council of Europe. Within these organizations young people have the opportunity to search for a clear identity, a stable present and a better future. Young people and youth organizations are playing an important part in the process of European integration. World wide, young people aspire to be cornerstones in the shaping and building of one great global village made not of utopian aspirations but of concrete opportunities for a better life.

This new world, even more than that of today, should be marked by a freer flow of information, persons, goods, services and communications. Young people are rightfully concerned about the future, because this new global village will be the reality of their everyday life in days to come. Key players in this new scenario are young people and youth organizations. In facing the challenge of building a better social and economic environment, they are on the same footing as politicians and decision makers, and therefore demand to be considered as real partners.

We live the reality of an ongoing revolution in the traditional way of life with new technologies, exchanges at all levels, global interdependence and new social and ideological conflicts. In the search for their personal and cultural identity, young adults want to contribute and to play an important social role. Their attitude is not antagonistic. They want to contribute and be part of society, making it a place with which they can better identify themselves and become involved and committed. Nationalistic, monocultural social concepts have become multinational and multicultural. Diversity is an enrichment, not a reason for intolerance, racism or xenophobia.

Some tend to believe that a large number of young people, especially in the more affluent countries, are withdrawing from politics and public affairs. Others feel that young people are unmotivated, apathetic, individualistic and self-centred and have lost enthusiasm for promoting social values. Economic well-being and ideological and cultural conflicts influence and affect young people's lives, particularly when complex societies are characterized by the absence of social prospects and contradictions within the social system. In a consumer society, young people appear to live with the single objective of possessing the ever more sophisticated goods constantly coming onto the market. Elsewhere, young people face far different prospects and objectives. Some countries continue to be characterized by endemic and pervasive poverty, economic recessions and armed conflicts compounded by debilitating or fatal illnesses.

It is no longer possible to speak of young people as a single group with common expectations. They view and live society differently because they are experiencing different realities and situations in a socio-economic and cultural context of which there is no standard image. Young people constitute the group that is potentially the hardest hit in any economic recession. School-leavers have problems building careers and securing appropriate qualifications. They expect to find a job and become independent, but they are also very selective concerning their job expectations.

Sometimes young people become tired of living in a society based on permanent competition. They reject a school and university system based on competition and prefer a system based on the recognition of every individual's abilities. This situation is understandable, because after years of study and training, young people cannot afford to find a place in a society which seems to reject them.

Youth unemployment raises another problem: that of young people's place in society and the issue of social and occupational integration. Extended education increases their dependence on their elders, and unemployment aggravates this. This situation leads to prolonged financial and social dependence and makes it difficult for young people to develop their personal autonomy.

Young people feel that the path to take is that of a search for identity through cultures, lifestyles and forms of expression, in order to feel in harmony with the world around them. Speaking out is one way for them to play an active part in the community. This is where the role of youth non-governmental organizations becomes important. Young people join forces to reflect on the problems they encounter and then to act on them. By being members of youth organizations, by committing themselves and participating in society, they look for social progress and evolution in a society where freedom of the individual is linked to participation in collective life.

Youth today have a vision which sees them projected towards the future. They also have a remarkable power of influence on public opinion. Young people are the richest resource of our society.

Participation is the optimum medium through which we can build tomorrow's society. This process encourages young people to remain within, integrate into and lead fuller lives in society, where they can find ideas with which they can identify and to which they are willing to commit themselves. Participation provides training in democracy and helps them become accepted as a resource rather than viewed as a problem. It is more than a question of involvement in institutions and decision-making. It is vital to stress at this point the role of youth organizations in participation. They can provide the links at the social, cultural, spiritual, economic and political levels between youth and governmental institutions. Youth organizations give concrete expression to commitment and significance to solidarity by providing young people with the opportunity to participate in the construction of the future.

On the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, the United Nations is, more than ever, fully aware of this role and commitment of youth organizations. Now more than ever before, young people have to see themselves as global citizens as well as national citizens. The involvement of youth networks with United Nations programmes on subjects such as health, environment, employment and disarmament is an important part of the information exchange and can also influence and even transform these programmes. One hopes that the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year will be another step on the road to joint projects between the United Nations and youth organizations. Strength thrives on unity.

Youth in the year 2000 will be living in a highly competitive world marked by cultural, economic, social and political upheavals. If young people are to cope with this development, they need to be acquainted with new technologies, learn languages and develop social and cultural understanding. Youth exchanges and the promotion of youth mobility are effective means to enable young people to experience the world's diverse cultural, linguistic and religious traditions. Young people are pushing back national frontiers.

Intergovernmental cooperation in the field of youth should be a priority on Government agendas. It offers the possibility of sharing experience in combatting the difficulties facing young people, acts as a barrier to xenophobia and racism and contributes to the building of democratic ideals. All young people must be given the possibility of living this formative experience. This, however, depends on the political will of governments and on the consequent funding on a large scale which such mobility and exchange projects require.

An important matter of concern for Governments and youth organizations is North-South relations, a vital problem for the future of the world. Youth organizations and young people are very concerned about this, and try to promote interdependence and solidarity between the countries of the North and the developing countries of the South.

The Government of Malta is fully aware of the aspirations and rights of young people today. It encourages a spirit of enterprise and academic attainment, provides the infrastructure necessary for employment in various sectors and promotes exchange and mobility projects with various countries. In collaboration with the National Youth Council and other bodies working in the youth field, it has produced a national youth policy which seeks to set out the objectives to be achieved for youth in Maltese society and to provide guidelines for the implementation of these objectives.

It is the policy of the Government of Malta, as outlined in its national youth policy: to provide youth with equal opportunity to education free of any charge, including education at the tertiary level, and to cultural formation directed at enhancing personal growth; to seek to understand the just aspirations of youth and to direct its resources to their fulfilment; to integrate young people in the mainstream of the social, political and economic life of the country, recognizing them as a vital element of the future of the nation; to develop among youth a sense of intergenerational solidarity, cooperation among themselves and a commitment to those with special needs; to assist young people in the further development of a European consciousness based on the creation of an awareness of a common European culture emanating from different traditions; to instil in young people a spirit of self-confidence and a belief in their ability to realize their potential in society; to nurture young people's spirit of altruism and self-sacrifice and their attachment to ideals; to appreciate the importance of youth as a positive force for change and renewal; to encourage the appreciation of cultural diversity and assist youth mobility as a major tool in furthering first-hand knowledge of different cultures and ways of life; and to endeavour to strengthen the moral and spiritual values of young people.

In 1992, the University of Malta, following an approach from the Ministry responsible for youth, set up an Institute of Youth Studies. The Institute carries out courses up to degree level for the training of qualified personnel to work in the youth field. It carries out research on the situation of young people in Malta and provides information and suggestions for furthering our youth policy.

The establishment of youth centres is encouraged and supported, while most local councils cater for the needs of young people through an office of a counsellor responsible for youth affairs. The Government of Malta adopts policies assisting young people to find and own decent housing, to seek profitable employment, to have access to all necessary data and means to further their healthy well-being, to assist young people with special needs, marginalized youth and youth at risk, to overcome their difficulties and recover their self-esteem.

Last year, the Government of Malta, together with the National Youth Council, hosted the first-ever Euro-Arab youth conference, which confirmed Malta's rightful aspirations as a cultural and political centre in the Mediterranean, a focal point where diverging views and policies may be freely discussed and analysed. These policies being pursued by the Government of Malta should ensure the development of a solid base from which young people can launch their vision, hopes and aspirations towards a better world of opportunities at the start of the next millennium.

The President: I now call on the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, Mrs. Kaba.

Mrs. Kaba (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): It gives me pleasure to take the opportunity of the celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year to stress the importance for Côte d'Ivoire of the question of youth and the integration of young people in the process of the economic and social development of our country.

Youth represent 18 per cent of the world population, that is, 1.01 billion persons between 15 to 24 years of age; 84 per cent of these people live in developing countries and represent a challenge within the context of the economic and social crisis that rages in Africa, as well as representing the enormous potential on which the future of our continent is based.

Since 1985 — International Youth Year — the number of young people in the population of Africa has more than doubled, rising from 42.2 million to 105.2 million in 10 years. This growth tied to the almost chronic demographic explosion in our country has not been accompanied by a proportionate increase in resources. On the contrary, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have gone through a period of economic recession aggravated by the drying up of the flow of external resources. Thus, the massive arrival of these young people, some of them skilled, on the labour market has represented an additional burden for economies in recession that have undergone the inescapable treatment administered by the international financial institutions. The consequence of this is underemployment, unemployment for most of those ejected by the school system, and real impoverishment for all.

In most cases the health and education infrastructures have not been able to meet the social and cultural needs of young people. The result of this has been a rural exodus, the uncontrolled growth of major cities with the arrival of young people from the countryside in search of employment, their marginalization, and consequently the social ills that we are all familiar with: drugs, juvenile delinquency, crime and prostitution.

Côte d'Ivoire, although it gives priority to youth questions in its economic and social policy, has not been spared by this phenomenon. My country has invested in health and education at all levels, provided sporting and cultural facilities, and granted study scholarships to deserving students from modest circumstances. This made it possible, in the first two decades of independence, to cope successfully with our responsibilities for the young population. But the economic crisis of the last decade has made it impossible to respond to all their needs.

However, thanks to the slight economic recovery, the Government's primary concern has been to give young people outside the school system the opportunity to study and to learn a trade. Crafts, art, agriculture, fish breeding and various small trades have enabled these youngsters to take their place in the economic development of our country. The task is big and the resources still modest, but the Government of Côte d'Ivoire is working to absorb youth unemployment by providing job opportunities.

While youth are a challenge to our countries, they also represent appreciable wealth when they are empowered to take their own future in hand. If this is to happen, we must first listen to them and take account of their aspirations, their wishes and their vision of society. Young people have an extraordinary capacity for mobilization, and they display real determination in defending the causes that are dear to them. If this energy can be channelled in the right direction through suitable education, these young people can be the best vehicles for such values as tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity.

Youth organizations in Europe are fighting against racial discrimination and are helping to mould a new world in which differences will be accepted. It was young people who fell in Soweto in the fight against apartheid. We must enable young people to organize, to meet each other, to have exchanges with youth from other parts of the world, so that they understand and appreciate each other better.

Moreover, young people have a sense of innovation and creativeness that can be a valuable asset in devising and implementing policies for economic and social development. They deserve to be considered as fully fledged citizens and to have the chance to participate in all activities in order to cultivate their sense of responsibility.

We can then be proud of our young people, for they will be responsible, positive and creative, while retaining the spontaneity that is the charm of youth.

The President: I now call on Ms. Malin Berggren, Youth Delegate of Sweden.

Ms. Berggren (Sweden): When I began to prepare for this speech a couple of weeks ago I asked a close friend what he thought I should say. "Well, Malin," he said, "I had to write an essay in the eighth grade on the subject 'What I would say to the United Nations General Assembly if I ever had the chance'. Just read that."

Today, I actually have the opportunity of doing what millions of young people would like to do: address the General Assembly of the United Nations. More than anything else, I wish to use this opportunity of participating here today to stress exactly that — participation. Participation of youth in all sectors of society and in all areas of decision-making is the only way for us to tackle the challenges that face young people.

This historic week started with a unique meeting of Heads of State and Government and, let us hope, will end with the adoption of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In this Hall the Heads of State and Government stressed the need to reform the United Nations to enable it better to meet the demands of today and tomorrow. I am convinced that we, the young people, and our participation are an important part of the answer. With our perspectives, energy and ideas, we can contribute something positive, forward-looking and constructive.

During these days it has often been said that young people are the *future*. That is true, but it is only part of the truth. Young people are both actors and factors in society *at present*. With a greater sense of responsibility, we can also feel greater commitment to the future. We, the young people, must therefore be considered a resource, and not a problem.

We are about to adopt — I really hope — the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. I guess we all feel that the draft Programme could have been better. However, let us consider it to be the start, not the end, of a necessary process. It is now my hope, and the hope of the Swedish Government, that the draft Programme will lead to a strengthened role for youth at all levels: local, national and international.

We welcome the fact that the draft World Programme of Action has taken into account the results achieved at the recent conferences on environment in Rio, on human rights in Vienna, on population in Cairo, on social development in Copenhagen and on women in Beijing. Young people have an unconventional wisdom that is needed when tackling the challenging results of these meetings. The draft World Programme of Action also stresses the need to involve youth in actions on all these issues.

The implementation of the draft World Programme of Action will be the responsibility of Governments. It will require national mechanisms for integrated youth policies and programmes. It will also require — maybe most important — possibilities for young people to participate in the implementation.

So, how does the United Nations measure up to the tasks set out in the draft World Programme of Action? It is my opinion that the present United Nations machinery for youth does not give young people sufficient possibilities to influence the work of the Organization. The United Nations needs effective channels of communication between youth organizations and the entire United Nations system — channels for talk but, even more, channels for action; channels for, by and together with young people. In this context, Sweden strongly supports a United Nations youth forum with a great influence by youth organizations in all stages of the process.

Having highlighted the importance of participation by youth, I also want to point out one specific area where young people do not want to participate. That is war. Youth has no future in war. Conflict prevention programmes for and by young people will enhance our role in preventing war. Youth organizations can be consulted on fact-finding, contribute to early warning and shape the very political will at home that can bring our Governments to action.

This year, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, is one full of talk of reform and of promise for the future. The future is here today — in schools, in homes, in playgrounds and in this Hall. I urge you to look, and to listen to it.

Programme of work

The President: On the morning of Tuesday, 31 October 1995, the Assembly will take up, as the first item, agenda item 48, entitled "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)".

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.44

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

44th plenary meeting
Friday, 27 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Vice President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

Commemoration to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Malaysia, Mr. Razali.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): Two days after the Special Commemorative Meeting to mark the founding of the United Nations itself, we are meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. Both events deal in many ways with the collective future of humanity. While in youth lies our future, humanity must find sustenance and succour in a United Nations that genuinely manifests multilateralism. The themes of International Youth Year that were launched in 1985, pertaining to distributive justice, popular participation and quality of life, remain relevant as we undertake an exercise to reform and restructure the multilateral system. The youth of the world must be involved in this important exercise, as they will inherit the system.

As rightly observed and recognized, young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face, as well as their vision and aspirations, are an essential component of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and of future generations.

We are gratified that the final draft of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond identifies 10 priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. It is also to be noted that the Programme of Action does not exclude the possibility of new priorities being identified in the future, thus giving the Programme the flexibility to take on board agreed changes.

Of the 5.6 billion people in the world, 1.03 billion are youths, and 84 per cent of them are in developing countries. Of these, over 60 per cent are in the Asia-Pacific region. This portion is expected to increase to 89 per cent by the year 2025. Another statistical indicator pertains to the global work force. Of the 2.8 billion people in the labour market world wide, over 120 million are unemployed and 700 million are underemployed. This

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information underscores the need for us to prepare appropriate responses, ranging from the providing for productive employment to addressing social problems. The final draft Programme of Action attempts to provide a broad framework to address these problems.

Malaysia's national development philosophy has continued to place people at the centre of development. This has been incorporated in the formulation and implementation of our development policies to ensure, among other things, the involvement of our youth in the nation-building process. As a progressively industrializing country, Malaysia has placed great importance on the development of its human resources. With youth making up 42 per cent of the Malaysian population, it is imperative that Malaysia prioritize the development of this valuable national asset to further develop and improve our social and economic conditions. The rapid economic growth Malaysia has experienced has brought opportunities for our people. Yet at the same time, there are also social problems, such as drug abuse and the erosion of family values.

To imbue youth with knowledge, skills and a sense of social responsibility in a changing environment, Malaysia has embarked on a plan to ensure an overall balanced and healthy development programme for youth. This programme, known as Rakanmuda, or young friend, was initiated following a study of the problems of youth in Malaysia that was commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in early 1994. This programme is designed to provide a new vision for youth. It encompasses 10 lifestyles formulated to channel the energy of Malaysian youth towards healthy, productive, interesting and fruitful activities. More than 1 million Malaysian youths have registered to participate in this programme, which has been implemented with the close collaboration of Government agencies, the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Malaysia has also sought to develop leadership and business and technical skills among its youth through formal and informal programmes, including technology programmes and business and skill training programmes.

Not only are Malaysian youth organizations active participants in national development; they are also encouraged and given the opportunity to participate in regional and global programmes on issues of mutual concern and interest to all of us — the environment, health, human rights, and information technology, to name a few — to create awareness. Malaysian youths have been involved in exchange programmes at the bilateral and multilateral levels to promote international understanding while sharing with others our national experience of multi-racial and multi-religious society.

Youth in developing countries, including Malaysia, needs not only better health and information about health, but also access to better education and training, credit and technical assistance and technology. These concerns, if addressed, would reduce poverty, which is central to all efforts to enhance social and economic development. It is critical to have the cooperation of the international community in the pooling of technical expertise and other resources and in providing them to the development programmes for youth in developing countries. Youths, particularly those who are victims of ethnic strife, armed conflicts and lack of employment opportunities, deserve our immediate support.

Before concluding, I must underline once again the urgent need for adequate and timely means of implementation. Given the broad reach of the proposed World Programme of Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, along with the vast difference between the level of development of the poorest and least developed countries and that of the highly industrialized countries, the means of implementation for the priority areas identified in it are absolutely necessary if the Programme is to be operationalized.

The Acting President: I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ms. Mirbaha.

Ms. Mirbaha (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am very pleased to take part in these special meetings of the General Assembly devoted to marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. This is a welcome opportunity to assess the situation of youth in the world, at the very time that the United Nations turns 50 years young. The hopes, dreams and aspirations for a better future for mankind expressed a few days ago, in this very Hall, by world leaders during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, rest, in effect, in the hands of young people. They will be the agents of realizing those hopes and dreams. Thus, the future lies in the vision, commitment and success or failure of our efforts to deal with issues facing youth today.

A British writer said in 1845 that the youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity. This is all the more true today in our increasingly small world. The youth are the true trustees of the posterity of our global citizenry. Thus no matter how hard we try and how many resources we devote to creating an atmosphere in which young people can develop to their fullest potential, we have not done enough. Investing in youth today is ensuring our future tomorrow. In this time of scarce resources and competing interests, it is easy to be persuaded to accord marginal importance to the question of youth in our national, regional and international efforts. International Youth Year in 1985, and these special meetings of the General Assembly on its tenth anniversary, are timely efforts to fight such tendencies.

In 1995, 84 per cent of the world youth population of 1.03 billion — people aged 15 to 24 — live in developing countries. The difficulties resulting from the North-South gap hit young people in the developing world even harder, marginalizing them even further because of the limited resources for education and training, viable employment, and health and social services. Therefore, from an international economic perspective, more favourable North-South relations, in which the great divide would stop widening and begin shrinking, would have a marked impact on the betterment of the general condition of 89 per cent of the world youth population in 2025.

My delegation notes with appreciation the efforts of the United Nations system, particularly the Commission on Social Development, in addressing the problems facing youth around the world. Prominent among these efforts are those related to concluding and adopting the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. In our opinion, the World Programme of Action constitutes a considerable step towards the improvement of the situation of youth world wide, because it provides a framework and multisectoral standards for both policy-making and implementation at the national, regional and international levels. Naturally, Governments should work with young people and their grass-roots organizations at the national level to develop responses and strategies for dealing with the particular issues facing them that are appropriate to their own historical background and cultural heritage.

The 10 priority areas identified by the draft World Programme of Action for Youth constitute the conceptual framework of these efforts. The priority areas identified in the World Programme of Action are education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure time activities, girls and young women, and full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making. We note that the three themes of International Youth Year — participation, development and peace — are at the core of each of the 10 priority areas and of their principal issues and specific objectives and of the actions proposed.

Education is identified as the first priority, and perhaps the prerequisite, for social development. Unfortunately, the economic situation and dire lack of resources in many developing countries have seriously hampered the promotion of educational opportunities. Many young people are forced to leave school and join the labour force in order to survive. The education of girls and young women is especially crucial in guaranteeing them gainful employment opportunities. Indeed, education is the single most effective factor in improving the quality of life of the whole family, as the parents are the child's first educators.

Throughout the last decade, the Islamic Republic of Iran has adopted numerous constructive measures in this regard, and their impressive results are recorded in official international statistics. Foremost among these successes are the increase in the number of literate women, the high percentage of women in higher education, and the almost equal school enrolment of boys and of girls.

In this connection, the role of our National Organization for the Intellectual Growth of Children and Young Adults is of particular importance in Iran. This organization, which has branches all over the country, is devoted to providing non-formal education to children and young adults to foster their intellectual growth, spirit of search and public participation. A pilot programme has been in place in Tehran for the past five years in the area of leisure-time activities for youth. This programme, which has focused mainly on inner-city youth, includes sports complexes of different kinds, time-sharing public computer centres and cultural facilities throughout the capital. Other municipalities throughout the country are gradually following suit and establishing similar community programmes.

The global recession has been a major factor behind world-wide unemployment, particularly in developing countries. This constitutes yet another critical area of concern that has affected youth more than other segments of the population. Poverty and unemployment isolate and marginalize the young, preventing them from becoming independent and establishing families, thus leaving them few options, of which the most tempting is to resort to social ills such as drugs, violence or crime to earn a living.

As a result, today many young people face the debilitating problems of poverty and isolation, and have lost their faith in the future. For these critical reasons, the creation of employment opportunities and the full integration of youth into society should be given priority in all national youth policies and programmes. Young women and young men share these problems, and others. The social network of a country must offer sufficient provisions for young women, including child care, so mothers of young children can participate in work and education.

Another major area of concern is the vulnerability of young people to drug abuse. Sadly, in today's world, the consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly among young people, are all too apparent. The international community places particular emphasis on reducing the demand for, and supply of, illegal drugs. To this end, national initiatives and measures to combat illicit trafficking must be fully supported and reinforced at the national, regional and international levels.

While emphasizing regional and international cooperation in implementing the mandates of international drug conventions, my country has additionally committed itself to fight strongly against narcotic drugs, placing the highest priority on drug control measures. These measures include law enforcement training for combatting illicit drug trafficking, treatment and rehabilitation of drug abusers, and public education on the issue.

Young people are among the most vulnerable segments of the population. They naturally seek stimuli, ideologies, dreams and hopes, and are highly susceptible, therefore, to social ills in their tendency to look for change and to experiment. The family and other informal control groups provide the necessary protection for them against social evils, and, at the same time, help them to pursue a physically and morally healthy social life.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, except for juvenile delinquents who commit capital offenses and other heinous crimes, young people do not go through the formal criminal justice system and do not carry the label and stigma of criminality for the rest of their lives. Their cases are adjudicated with a view to their reintegration into the community through a network of community-based half-way houses, and vocational training centres where they receive counselling, formal education and job training.

Most of the social complications discussed here can be attributed to an erosion of moral and religious values in our societies. The world, particularly youth, is suffering from a moral crisis which, in many societies, is of immense proportion. To avert this crisis of identity, we have to respond to the spiritual needs of young men and women as well as to their temporal needs.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strives to create a suitable environment for the moral, educational, intellectual and physical growth of its youth. In 1992, the Supreme Council for Youth was established to formulate and implement specific programmes based on prevailing needs and priorities, in order to deal with issues concerning youth. The President of the Islamic Republic of Iran actively chairs this policy-making Council. In spite of the short time this Council has been in existence, integrated policies have been adopted to address the needs of young people. Some of the key policies which have been formulated with the participation of young people themselves are as follows: design and implementation of over 50 large-scale field research projects to identify the problems facing youth in Iran today and to make policy suggestions about strategies to deal with them; establishment of a comprehensive data bank based on over 300,000 books, articles and university theses on various issues relating to youth; adoption of a Youth Training and Educational Charter, to serve as the highest policy document of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the cultural and educational advancement of the young Iranian generation, and compilation of over 2,000 multisectoral actions for the realization of this goal; provision of interest-free loans to start families to young people who would otherwise be financially unable to do so; establishment of youth councils in all provinces, aimed at extending the implementation of policies and programmes envisaged for youth across the country. The Youth Training and Educational Charter of 1992 in Iran, and the serious implementation of its programme of action are believed to have been an important factor in the gradual decrease in the youth unemployment rate, the increase in the literacy rate, and the increase in social and health services to youth.

In conclusion, although the main responsibility for the implementation of the objectives and actions set by the draft Programme rests with national Governments, one should not lose sight of the fact that these ambitious targets cannot be attained by one Government alone, particularly when the available resources are limited. Therefore, a new partnership needs to be initiated with the involvement of major actors, including Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. International cooperation in this regard should perhaps go beyond policy-level issues and concentrate primarily on ways and means implementing the Programme of Action in terms of exchanges of information on research and studies, and technical cooperation.

The Acting President: I should like to inform the Assembly that the representative of Suriname has requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of this delegation in the list of speakers?

I see none. Suriname is, therefore, included in the list.

I now call upon Mr. Christos Messis, Vice-Chairman of the Governing Council of the Cyprus Youth Board.

Mr. Messis (Cyprus): At a time when our interdependent world is becoming a global village owing to the tremendous rate of technological advancement, our young people face vexed questions which must be addressed nationally, regionally and globally. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year provides us with an excellent opportunity to review the achievements thus far and to find answers to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. The serious problems faced by the youth of our world concern us all because the responsibility belongs to everyone.

Despite the notable improvements that humanity has achieved in many areas, there is still much to be done regarding youth. There are still many countries where starvation, illiteracy, poverty and war continue to exist, resulting in suffering, especially among the young. At the same time, in countries where peace and prosperity prevail, drugs, unemployment and juvenile delinquency vigorously strike the new generation. This describes the tragic situation faced by the youth of our planet. Youth problems are different from country to country, from nation to nation and from one social group to another. One, therefore, cannot rely on any single approach for their solution. Furthermore, the complexity and heterogeneity of youth greatly exacerbate the obstacles and difficulties in our efforts to improve the present situation.

I would like to refer, as an example, to my own country, the Republic of Cyprus, which is a small country with an area of 3,500 square miles, a population of 700,000 people and a prosperous society. In Cyprus, where the level of education is very high and unemployment is almost non-existent, the continuing occupation of 37 per cent of its area and the uprooting of one third of its population due to the Turkish invasion of 1974, continue to have their profound and disastrous effects on the youth of Cyprus.

The population in the occupied part of my country, which was forcibly uprooted, has temporarily been accommodated in cities and refugee settlements in the free areas of the Republic. This has had, and continues to have, very negative effects on the social behaviour and the way of life of the youth of Cyprus, who are now forced to live in relatively crowded and unfamiliar city dwellings. The social changes that have taken place since 1974 have upset the institutions and customs of the society of Cyprus, which is based on strong family units. The psychological effects of the invasion and continuing occupation of Cyprus are unavoidably devastating. The influence of the economic, social and psychological factors of the invasion has been especially visible in the young, who are a vulnerable social group. As a result, the new generation of Cyprus finds itself facing dangers and complex problems.

Despite all these adverse factors, prudent Government policies, implemented through the involvement and direct participation of youth organizations in the decision-making process in the years that followed the tragic events of 1974, have enabled us to overcome some of the problems and to heal some of the wounds. The strong traditional family ties that are the very fabric of our society have contributed to the easier adjustment of our youth to the new circumstances created by the invasion of 1974.

Furthermore, through the tremendous efforts of the people and the Government to overcome the sufferings, a few positive developments also took place. Some examples are the high level of education, the creation of institutions and bodies for youth, and especially the noticeable increase in social awareness. These beneficial results of the youth of Cyprus were only achieved in cases where young people were given the opportunity to get involved and participate in decision-making centres dealing with issues related to them. Thus, the cornerstone of our policy has been to ensure that our youth should not feel marginalized or alienated from the rest of the body politic.

Undoubtedly, recognition by society of the competence, the reliability and the rights of the new generation are prerequisites for success in any effort aimed at its welfare. This is primarily initiated through the participation of youth in the decision-making process and in the implementation of agreed Government policies. Without this participation, even the best and highly financed programmes will remain ineffective and non-applicable.

The new generation is the global hope for a better future. The young people of the world have both the knowledge and the ability to meet today's challenges. In this respect, the modern technological era of enhanced education in electronic information has a substantial contribution to make. We agree with the statement made today by the youth delegates that youth are not the problem, they are the solution. In our opinion, what needs to be done is for society, without prejudice, and going beyond declatory statements, to give youth what rightfully belongs to them and what they really deserve. This is the only universal approach aiming at giving youth and humanity itself a chance for a brighter future on our planet in the coming century.

The Acting President: I now call on Mr. Armando Arteaga Tenorio, Youth Representative of Mexico.

Mr. Arteaga Tenorio (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, we would like to express our support for the statement made by the representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Rio Group. We believe that it is very important that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has coincided with the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, since this is a particularly appropriate time to reflect on the contradictions and problems confronting youth at the end of the millennium and to seek different ways to meet the challenges shared by the international community in this field.

The expectations of the new generations of youth have been affected drastically by changes at the end of the century. The traditional problems that have been facing young people over the past two decades, such as unemployment, the need for education and vocational training, drug abuse, delinquency or the heartbreaking effects of hunger and poverty, have all increased.

To these growing trends can be added the emergence of so-called problems of modern life, including large-scale migrations mainly of young people, the emergence and growth of AIDS and environmental devastation, which make it clear that we are living in a fragile world with limited resources.

Similarly, the messages of violence reaching the youth of today have increased considerably as compared to the messages young people received only 10 or 15 years ago. This, combined with the effects of marginalization and low expectations, contributes to the emergence of increasingly violent societies. Thus, mainly in large urban areas, new generations are losing the ability to be shocked at the problems affecting community life. This is what some critics have come to call the value crisis of generation X.

This all underlines the crucial importance of the United Nations appeal to Governments to introduce youth policies with an integral and forward-looking approach. We believe that the priority areas of the draft World Programme of Action include viable possibilities in the search for solutions to the problems to which the Programme refers.

We would like to make a few comments on the way it is implemented and mention the importance of considering the following strategies. First, the constant promotion of the participation of youth as a group, with shared responsibility, in the design, implementation and assessment of national programmes that will generate alternative strategies for youth development. Second, the strengthening of institutional coordination of the competent entities in each Government from within, in order to provide for coordination in target regions or groups in respect of integral and complementary programmes. Third, guarantees that youth-oriented actions will continue by incorporating the principal concepts of the Programme in the proper legal and regulatory framework. Fourth, the development of a strong communications policy in the electronic and printed media, so that in addition to informing and providing guidance on alternative solutions to the problems, dialogue with young people and participation by them will be broadly based. Fifth, the promotion of research on an ongoing basis so that the provisions of the Programme in different spheres of action can be gradually adapted and respond to changes in the regions, age groups, or the nature of the specific problems.

In Mexico, there are three specialized programmes dealing with youth. In addition, the Government targets youth in all programmes in the public administration. In this way, policies in education, employment, health, justice, training, culture or recreation have a direct impact on the young population.

Since the present administration took over, youth policy has been strengthened. Thus, in the Legislature, there has been support for the establishment of youth committees in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate respectively, as well as in the Assembly of Representatives of the Federal District and seven local congresses.

As regards the draft World Programme of Action for Youth Towards the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Government of Mexico will be studying and discussing its contents in the youth committees in both the legislature and the executive.

Finally, I would like to point out that we are aware that the attainment of the integral development of youth depends on the same factors that define the economic, political and social lives of nations. The problems of new generations are only a reflection of the problems of society at large but seen from a medium-term and long-term perspective. This means that we must think about the world, not in terms of something we have inherited from our parents, but as something on loan for our children.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Bangladesh, Mr. Ziauddin.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): Socio-economic development, to be most effective, must encompass all segments of society, particularly the world's youth, which currently comprises 18 per cent of the total world population. Over 84 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries, and over 60 per cent live in Asia. Youth comprises a very significant segment of society, and its concerns, views and problems must be given our full attention, in order to build a solid foundation for successful socio-economic growth and development for the world of tomorrow.

In 1985, International Youth Year drew attention to the growing numbers and needs of the world's youth. Ten years have passed, and profound and wide-ranging international socio-economic changes have taken place. During this decade, new challenges and unforeseen difficulties have arisen for the developing countries and their youth populations, leading to their continued overall international marginalization and socio-economic deterioration.

The 1990s have seen a renewed emphasis on social concerns, with six United Nations conferences taking place over a period of five years, each addressing fundamental social issues which are of direct concern to the world's youth. We must build upon these recent international developments by incorporating special provisions for youth and translating them into actions.

Today, in 1995, we reflect not only upon the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, but also upon the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. At this moment, we have an ideal opportunity to bring the special problems of youth to the attention of Governments and the United Nations system, and to launch special global activities to ensure that youth and their concerns are better integrated into development strategies and activities. The preparation of a target-oriented World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, to be implemented within a specific time-frame, is a matter of utmost priority and importance.

We are confident that the draft World Programme of Action will provide a policy framework and practical guidelines for an international partnership and development paradigm based on the mutual interest and responsibility of national Governments and the international community to improve the situation of young people. We must strive to achieve the objectives of International Youth Year and to foster conditions and mechanisms to promote improved well-being and livelihood among young people for the years to come. The World Programme of Action should ensure an increased quality and quantity of opportunities available to young people for full, effective and constructive participation in society to the year 2000 and beyond.

Effective implementation of the draft World Programme of Action will require significant expressions of commitment by organizations, institutions and the international community, and the involvement of youth from all sectors of society. Therefore, an overall system of enabling mechanisms is necessary, engaging the human, political, economic, financial and socio-cultural resources necessary for the World Programme of Action to be implemented on the national, regional and international level.

Bangladesh has taken special action to advance its youth, who comprise one third of its population. The Department of Social Services has introduced youth welfare services to help solve the problems faced by unemployed young persons, school dropouts and homeless youths. In view of the dimension and importance of the problem, a separate Ministry of Youth has been established. A national youth policy has been adopted to promote and ensure the rights of youth, particularly in the areas of education, skills development, employment, and participation in community development activities.

Special emphasis has also been placed on promoting and ensuring the active participation and development of girls and young women. In Bangladesh, we have heavily invested in the education of the girl child through stipends, free education for female students, and an innovative programme of "food-for-education" designed specifically to address the high dropout rate prevalent among girl children.

While addressing the question of youth, we would like to underscore the importance of social values and norms and the role of the family in youth development. Society must instil in its youth the true value of traditions and customs for a strong family, which is the basic unit of society, and which has the primary responsibility in developing youth.

Sustainable socio-economic development must mean investing in youth to enable them to take charge of their own destiny. Young people in all countries are both a major human resource for development and key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Their imagination, ideals, energy and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. The problems that young people face as well as their vision and aspirations are an essential component of the challenges and prospects of today's societies and future generations as well. The ways in which the challenges and potentials of young people are addressed by policy will influence current social and economic conditions and the well-being and livelihood of future generations.

Up until this time, the rights of young people have not received the same deserved attention from the United Nations system as have other groups of the population. Young people in all parts of the world, living in countries at different stages of development and in different socio-economic situations, aspire towards full participation in the life of society, as provided in the United Nations Charter. Relevant United Nations agencies and programmes, therefore, need to intensify their efforts for the development of youth.

With this session, Bangladesh sincerely hopes for a successful conclusion of the formulation phase of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. It would be a good beginning. Upon its adoption by the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the World Programme of Action will enter its second and perhaps most vital phase — that of full and timely world-wide implementation to complete the process. Bangladesh gives its full endorsement to the draft World Programme of Action and underscores the need for concerted action and cooperation at all levels. With this, the international community will enter a new international era — one in which the overall socio-economic situations of youth and the societies in which they live will see continued improvement through the realization of their development goals. This should be our solemn pledge, because today's youth are our future.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Iqbal Haider, Senator of Pakistan.

Mr. Haider (Pakistan): We are here to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. This is an important occasion to review the progress made so far and to address the challenges which still lie ahead of us.

In the last 10 years, greater awareness has been created concerning the problems of youth. However, action-oriented focus on youth world wide is still weak. The task before us is to realize the crucial importance of this subject and design strategies so that the youth of the world in the next 10 years emerge as both contributors to and beneficiaries of our societies.

Young men and women of today, as the Assembly would agree, are leaders of tomorrow. Their conditions determine the strengths and weaknesses of society as a whole. With ill-fed, uneducated and untrained youth, we cannot hope to build a progressive and viable community. Youth need a vision for the future and an environment in which they can attain their full growth and development.

The conditions of youth all over the world are precarious. In the developing countries, the aspirations of youth remain unfulfilled. The majority of them are illiterate, unemployed and outside the mainstream of social and economic life. Deprivation at home forces them to migrate to other countries to seek employment. Structural adjustment programmes weaken the capacity of various countries to allocate sufficient resources to address the problems of youth.

The labour markets are overcrowded, and in the years to come the pressure created by people looking for jobs will increase. According to the International Labour Organization, more than 100 million new jobs will have to be created to absorb the growing number of young people in developing countries. In addition, young people already in employment are exposed to the physical and psychological risks of social exclusion and marginalization.

In the developing countries there are very few primary and secondary schools. Opportunities for further education are restricted to small segments of the population. The absence of universal health care is compounded by the problems arising from the use of tobacco and other addictive drugs. Youth in any society is one of the groups most vulnerable to the hazards of disease, violence and death. Complex problems arising from poverty, unemployment, migration, urbanization, transition in the family structure, the erosion of traditional values and inadequate social support systems have led to an increase in juvenile delinquency.

For the past two years, the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council have been engaged in extensive negotiations aimed at finalizing the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The draft document that has so far been agreed to rightly identifies education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, the environment, drug abuse, girls and young women and the effective participation of youth as the most critical areas of concern for societies, Governments and the international community. To achieve desired results in these areas, we need to design and implement policies and programmes, at the national and international levels, in a coordinated manner. The emphasis should be on the integration of youth, and not on ad hoc fragmentary and piecemeal measures.

In international forums, whenever a specific issue — for instance, youth — is taken up, one witnesses a tendency to analyse the problem and to suggest solutions in isolation. We must realize that youth, women, the indigent and other vulnerable groups are all part of an indivisible whole requiring a holistic and comprehensive approach. In this process, some groups have to be identified for special attention and support. This must be done in the overall context of macroeconomic planning and development, a microeconomic framework, a social milieu and a favourable international environment.

We believe that the highest priority should be given to education for all. This would require not only reform of education systems but also greater stress on training in various skills and technologies, and wider participation of the private sector and all sectors of civil society. Education is an area in which international support can play a pivotal role in long-term investment in the future of youth. By educating our young people, we can shape a society that is more productive and socially responsible. This would also ensure meaningful interaction between youth groups all over the world. Education can be used as a tool to inculcate values which can prepare young men and women to play their part in the development process, conflict resolution and peacemaking. Education in the field of human rights will be invaluable in our campaign aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights.

The next important area is the generation of productive employment. We need to strengthen or create mechanisms to give young people easier access to credit and thus encourage them to start businesses and enterprises. Governments must create effective demand if employment is to be provided in the production sectors and in the marketing of goods and services. Young men in developing countries face the additional problems of seasonal unemployment, disguised unemployment and underemployment. These problems can be solved through Government intervention and international assistance programmes.

In the field of health, the aim should be to provide universal health care. As this may be a tall order for many countries, it is necessary, first, to concentrate on basic health services. Primary health care, combined with sanitation and the provision of clean drinking water, will go a long way to prevent disease and illness among young people. In the developing countries, large populations are threatened by malaria, cholera and typhoid. Insufficient attention is being given to the elimination of these diseases. Drug abuse is a serious menace, which affects youth adversely. Education and rehabilitation programmes should be strengthened to save young people from this scourge.

The overarching concern is widespread poverty and hunger in the developing countries. One billion people in the world live in conditions of abject poverty. Young people are affected directly by these conditions, which stymie their growth and reduce their participation in economic and social sectors. We must therefore redouble our efforts to eradicate poverty, in pursuance of the commitments made at Copenhagen. There can be no short-cut to the eradication of poverty among youth.

While the primary responsibility for the eradication of poverty rests on national Governments, we must adopt a global strategy to eliminate poverty, which, ultimately, affects both developed and developing countries.

Social integration of youth must be based on universal respect for human rights. The most vulnerable group among youth are young girls and women, who are exposed to various forms of discrimination. Many taboos still bar their full participation in economic and social life. These barriers have to be removed through determined efforts at the highest policy-making levels and at the grass-roots.

The Government of Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, accords priority to the problems of youth. Young men and women have always supported the Pakistan People's Party because of its progressive manifesto. We have always involved youth in decision-making by encouraging their participation in all political processes.

The Pakistani Government's $8 billion Social Action Programme addresses the urgent needs of the population, including youth, in the areas of basic education, primary health care, nutrition, water supply and sanitation. The main objectives of this programme are to eradicate poverty, redress gender inequities, encourage rural development and provide environmental protection. The central plank of the Social Action Programme is a massive spread of primary education, with accelerated enrolment of girls. In one year alone, 10,800 new primary schools have been established in various parts of Pakistan. Thirty-four thousand new schools are being opened. To achieve our objective of universalizing primary education by the year 2000, we have increased the allocation to education by 2.5 per cent per annum.

A literacy commission will open 10,000 non-formal basic education and literacy centres in a year's time. Five education foundations have been established to promote public-private partnership on a matching-grant basis. Vocational and technical education is also receiving attention with a view to equipping school-leaving youth with marketable skills. Sixteen universities have introduced self-financing schemes in the disciplines of technology and sciences. An Open University with a network throughout the country is imparting education in skills, through distance-learning programmes, and is granting diplomas and degrees, from basic to post-graduate levels.

A category of entrepreneurs known as "created entrepreneurs" is being developed with the help of non-governmental organizations. An integrated package of services in this regard includes promotion of self-employment, information and exposure, credit and venture capital, training and marketing development. Credit facilities are being extended to youth through banks, leasing companies and small business corporations.

Special emphasis is being given to female education and health care in Pakistan. Sixty per cent of the funds of our Social Action Programme have been allocated to female literacy. In addition, under the Prime Minister's national health workers' scheme, 100,000 girls are being trained to provide a variety of services encompassing health, education and population welfare. Seventy per cent of the new schools planned over the next three years will be for girls. Some 932 women's development projects include income generation, technical know-how, vocational training, computer literacy and health care programmes.

The Government of Pakistan is also implementing plans to safeguard the rights of young offenders, and to ensure their reformation and rehabilitation. The Government has introduced a Child Offenders Act in Parliament, which would ban death sentences and harsh punishment for juvenile delinquents under the age of 16.

All these measures undertaken by the Government of Pakistan require consistent and determined efforts, participation of the private sector and non-governmental organizations and enhanced support from the international community. Resources will play a key role in determining the success of programmes aimed at the development of youth and their integration into society. The draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond provides a starting-point and an excellent basis for cooperation. However, international efforts should not be limited to policy level debates, research and data collection. The answer lies in technical cooperation and training programmes at the operational level. Enhanced international technical assistance and advisory services can decisively strengthen national capacities and the institutional basis for supporting national plans and strategies designed to solve the problems of youth.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mr. Hamida.

Mr. Hamida (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: First of all, I should like to mention the commemoration by the Libyan people yesterday of the anniversary of the largest exile operation the Libyan people was the victim of at the hands of the Italian fascists. More than 6,000 Libyans were taken from the bosoms of their families and exiled. Their destiny is unknown to this day. Among the exiles were many young people. They were all exiled for no crime, simply for resisting fascism and struggling for national independence.

The celebration of the International Youth Year in 1985 and our commemoration today of the tenth anniversary of that year is an expression of the United Nations' continuing interest in youth, which started in 1965 by the General Assembly's declaration on the need to imbue youth with the values of peace, mutual respect and understanding between peoples.

The number of young people in the world today is estimated at over one billion, that is to say 18 per cent of the total population of the world; those young people constitute the principal effective force for social change and socio-economic development.

Youth today face grave problems, especially hunger, limited education and training opportunities, limited employment opportunities and limited access to health and social services. This has led to the spread among the young of dangerous phenomena such as drug abuse, juvenile delinquency and violence.

Regardless of the progress achieved by mankind in various areas, prosperity has not embraced all peoples or all social groups. The gap is ever widening between the poor and the rich and between the developing and the developed countries. In the world today, more than 120 million people still live in abject poverty and more than 120 million are officially unemployed, not to mention off-the-books unemployment. A large number of the unemployed and the poor are young people, many of whom are highly qualified and well-educated.

The adverse socio-economic situation in most countries, especially in the developing countries, has impacted on the lives of all social groups, including the young who have been the victims of unemployment, drug abuse, prostitution and the drift towards violence. Such a situation calls for urgent intervention and the putting in place of national policies and plans that would mobilize all available resources and capabilities in addressing and remedying these problems.

The problem of youth unemployment, which has worsen in recent years, should be accorded a high priority. The influx of young people into the labour market has led to the emergence of acute social problems; rapid advances in many scientific and technical areas have posed new challenges that must be faced by the education and training systems if youth unemployment is to be addressed properly and prevented from giving rise to many social ills, such as marginalization, poverty and delinquency.

Consequently, it is necessary, not only to provide education opportunities, but also to reform the educational content of school curricula by focusing on the eradication of technical illiteracy, teaching the young moral and humanitarian values and encouraging them to acquire new skills. This should be at the top of the national priorities of all countries.

The young are part of society. The problems that face them can be addressed only through the adoption of a well-integrated socio-economic approach. The convening of the social summit in Copenhagen in the first quarter of 1995 afforded the international community the opportunity of adopting an integrated programme of action for the achievement of socio-economic development for all classes of society.

A top priority of the programme has been the objective of eradicating poverty from the world as well as the commitment, on the national level, to take decisive action and on the international level to cooperate in the common endeavour to achieve that objective by focusing, both in policies and in action, on dealing with the root causes of poverty and on satisfying the human needs of all.

The adoption of prompt measures to implement the undertakings agreed at the Social Development Summit will have positive results in the interests of youth and ensure their full participation in the development and advancement of their societies.

In view of the fact that young people are a positive force in effecting change and development in society, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has devoted special attention to youth from the earliest age. Since we believe that education is the primary requirement for any society that looks forward to the contribution of new generations, we have instituted free education at all levels. Since the education and raising of children and young people depend on a sound family structure, Libyan law contains many provisions that protect the family and strengthen its cohesion. Proceeding from our belief that a healthy environment is important for the individual, we provide health services without cost to all our citizens.

These economic and social advantages of the Libyan people are threatened and obstructed by the unjust sanctions imposed by the Security Council under pressure from certain major Powers. These sanctions have impacted adversely on all classes of Libyan society, and have caused material loss which has amounted, so far, to over $10 billion, not to mention the loss of life as a result of road accidents and of long delays for those who seek medical treatment and recuperation abroad.

The absence of a favourable international environment of mutual respect between States, of willingness to settle disputes by dialogue and negotiation, of respect for the cultures, traditions and conventions of other nations instead of imposition of certain values and traditions on other peoples is bound to lead to more problems, suffering and tensions. Let us try to bequeath to our youth a world in which justice, peace and freedom would prevail, a world that would be free from poverty, disease, war and conflicts.

The Acting President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Mr. Abdellah.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic):* It gives me great pleasure on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year at a time when Tunisia, like other Member States, celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, to recall the esteem and admiration expressed by President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali when he addressed the General Assembly in 1989. These are feelings Tunisia has always had towards the United Nations with its laudable efforts to realize the aspirations of mankind, and of youth in particular, after progress, security and peace.

The support the United Nations has always extended to Tunisia in its struggle for liberation and the support provided by the Organization's specialized agencies to our country in its development endeavour, strengthen our devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter and our determination to work for the achievement of its goals. This is a stance that found expression, among other things, in our repeated participation in the Organization's peace-keeping operations in many regions of the world.

Since its independence in 1956, Tunisia has engaged in a comprehensive campaign to free Tunisians from poverty, ignorance and disease, as well as to ensure dignity and to build the basis for a modern national State as part of a complete development strategy based on investment in the human factor, and aimed at building a fully-balanced society that embraces all its segments without distinction.

Since Tunisia is a relatively young country, children and young people represent two thirds of our population. Those under 20 represent 45.5 per cent of our population, while those aged 15 to 29 represent 25 per cent. Consequently, our three decades of work for development has been particularly dedicated to the promotion of young people, who are considered to be the real wealth of the country.

Tunisia has scored marked successes in this respect, especially in the areas of education, preventive and remedial health care, training and vocational guidance, with the aim of building a modern Tunisia that enjoys stability and balance. Tunisia's reforms in this new era and the presidential measures taken in favour of youth and children are in keeping with the social and educational purposes and principles embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Tunisia signed just three months after it was adopted and ratified on 11 January 1992. The fact that that date has been chosen for the celebration of our annual Childhood Festival shows the importance our country attaches to children. We can also affirm that Tunisia's youth policy, particularly since the transformation that took place on 17 November 1987, has been oriented, at the cultural, social, educational and economic levels, towards giving concrete expression to the international community's motto for the 1985 International Youth Year, namely: "Participation, Development, Peace".

Proceeding from the belief that the individual's stages of life, from childhood, to youth, to old age, are an integral whole, Tunisia has committed itself to a youth policy designed to ensure complementarity among the three stages of life, in order to ensure psychological stability and respect for the values of the community. Special attention is paid to the social sector: 55 per cent of Tunisia's budget is allocated to that area. In particular, Tunisia is concerned with education which, since independence, has taken up 7 per cent of the gross domestic product and 25 per cent of the State budget.

On that basis, our policy towards youth and children in Tunisia has been founded on certain constant values, foremost among which are: first, the education of children and young people in a manner that strengthens their sense of belonging to the Tunisian nation, their adherence to our cultural values and their loyalty to our homeland. The sense of belonging to Tunisia, the Maghreb, the Arab and Islamic world, is also encouraged.

Secondly, our aim is to prepare children and young people to lead a responsible life and prepare them for citizenship in a civil community based on justice, moderation and tolerance.

Thirdly, young people are taught about rights and responsibilities. We aim to promote a culture favourable to human rights and to sensitize individuals to their responsibilities towards themselves, towards their families and their communities. We are also determined to train them in democracy, in theory and in practice.

Fourthly, we teach children the ethic of work, personal initiative, honest gain and self-reliance.

Fifth, we prepare young people to understand and support just causes, to reject every form of exploitation, discrimination or injustice and to understand that the individual's right to live in dignity and equality is sacred, and is enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Among the main components of Tunisia's new youth policy is the frank, healthy discussion of youth problems in order to determine young people's real needs and know their views on various national and international issues. Tunisia has opened many channels of communication with its youth through dialogue, and its policies have enabled its youth to understand their responsibilities and to gain an understanding of the workings of democracy. In this context, our President declared 1988 a Year of Dialogue with Youth and, in so doing, heralded a new era of closeness with our young people.

While dialogue with youth makes it possible for young people to participate in the life of the nation, Tunisia has also committed itself to establishing executive and consultative structures that would make it possible for young Tunisians to exercise their natural rights, make their national choices and chart a future course in a context of democracy and equal opportunities. Consequently, in 1987 the minimum age for a parliamentary candidate was lowered from 30 to 25 and in the case of municipal councils from 28 to 22. In this new era, Tunisia's Government wants the country's youth to be represented in all consultative structures and also wants to create new structures that would make it possible for young people to participate in deliberations and decision-making.

Over the last 10 years, Tunisia's youth policy has encouraged young people to be creative and innovative in science, culture and sports. Young people are rewarded with prizes, such as the President's prize for young people and the President's prize for sporting spirit, as well as with other incentives. Deserving young people of all ages and from all social sectors are rewarded in other ways as well. This includes orphans, some of whom have been fortunate enough to meet the President of the Republic on national children's day and on other religious and national holidays.

Those, then, are the perennial values underlying Tunisia's youth policy, and it is a pleasure for me to recount to the Assembly the achievements of that policy over the last decade. In the spirit of exchanging views and experiences with other States whose situations might be different from our own, I offer this summary of our national experience so that it might serve to enrich their own.

As I have said already, the sector of education is allocated about a quarter of the State budget every year. That is a constant in Tunisian policy. One out of every four Tunisians now attends school. In the past 10 years, we introduced a series of educational reforms in terms of structures, programmes and legislation. This has been crowned by a new law, passed on 29 July 1991, which stipulates that the State guarantees all school-age children the right to free education. Schooling is mandatory for children between the ages of 6 and 16, and there are sanctions for parents who fail to comply.

As for higher education, a new law has been enacted regarding university education and academic research, and a State Ministry for Scientific Research and Technology has been established, along with other existing structures in universities and research academies. Furthermore, we have established a "science city". The number of students has risen from 41,000 in 1986 to 103,000 at present. It is worth mentioning that 11.2 per cent of our young people between the ages of 18 and 24 attend university. This percentage is expected to rise to 15 per cent by the year 2000.

Side by side with measures that promote a favourable educational climate, we have modernized our formal job training sector in order to make it possible for young people to gain the experience and skills required in today's economy and, thereby, make it possible for them to engage in gainful employment. A law on vocational training calls for the establishment of an integrated vocational training system. Furthermore, there are standardized provisions regulating initiatives to encourage job creation for young people. We now have in operation a vocational training agency and have set up a mechanism to promote and encourage small businesses.

As regards health, we provide primary care, preventive care and, above all, maternity care. We also ensure universal vaccination and family-planning services. Due to the State's efforts to improve health conditions in the country, life expectancy has increased and potable water is now available to all homes in the cities and to 80 per cent of homes in the countryside. As a result of this public health policy, we have been able, as of 1994, to eradicate all child diseases. Vaccination rates at 98 to 99 per cent are extremely high, and infant mortality has dropped from 51.6 per 1,000 in 1985 to 32 per 1,000 while child mortality, especially of those under 5 years of age, has dropped to 38 per 1,000.

At the level of social care, protection of the vulnerable sectors of society from discrimination and marginalization is one of the constants of Tunisia's social policy. Thus the disabled are guaranteed education, rehabilitation, vocational training and job opportunities. Legislation ensures that the disabled are not discriminated against in any area where their disabilities would stand in their way and prevent them from exercising their rights. Our High Council for the Advancement of the Disabled ensures their participation in the formulation of all policies that touch upon their interests.

Tunisian legislation regulates the working conditions of children and young people and protects them from economic exploitation. This law, which was inspired by international legislation, provides for a minimum working age, pre-employment medical examinations, controls night work for children, protects their health and safety in the workplace and provides for annual leave and a minimum wage.

As regards the protecting of children, Tunisian policy is committed to preserving the stability of the family, improving its living conditions and to ensuring the discharge by parents of their responsibilities towards their children. Certain legal and social mechanisms have been set up to sanction any failure on the part of the family to comply with these provisions.

We feel that the most important achievement in the area of childhood protection was the President's decision to draft a law on that subject, which Parliament is currently discussing. We feel that this law will have a very beneficial effect on Tunisian children.

In the area of recreation and culture, Tunisia has been focusing on the leisure-time institution and according to it the attention it deserves at the level of infrastructure and equipment. We have trained educators for young people at school and have created a network of specialized institutions in major cities, neighbourhoods and rural areas. These include children's clubs, youth centres, houses of culture and camping centres. We also provide bus services throughout the countryside and to rural youth clubs.

I should like in particular to mention the efforts we are making in the countryside in the "shadow areas". In the 1970s, Tunisia established an itinerant bus system to encourage cultural and sports activities in villages. Since the 1980s, we have been establishing a network of clubs in rural areas that also focus on children and young people.

Tunisia attaches particular importance to sports because they promote a sense of balance among our young people. They also promote *rapprochement* and honest competition amongst the youth of the whole world. We think also that sports help reconcile differences between peoples, in particular ethnic and religious differences. Tunisia therefore has reviewed its sports legislation in order to promote sports activities in schools and in universities.

With regard to equipment and infrastructure, Tunisia has made efforts to build swimming pools and sports stadia that can be used for a variety of sporting activities. In addition, we have been building the 7th of November sports city, which will be ready to host the fourteenth Mediterranean Games in the year 2001.

The youth of the world, as they take part in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, look forward to a new era of solidarity, understanding, cooperation and tolerance.

The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year today allows us to reaffirm the great responsibilities we all bear *vis-à-vis* the problems of today's youth: unemployment, lack of training, inferior health care and malnutrition, especially now that the changes which have taken place in the world have demonstrated that, young people, in the last analysis, have a decisive role to play in the interaction and the organic interrelationship between development, democracy, internal stability and international peace.

We hope that this tenth anniversary will be an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the world's young people and for all Member States to participate in deliberating on the draft "World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond", in order for it to be discussed, enriched and adopted.

Tunisia takes this opportunity to reiterate its support for the noble goals and guidelines contained in that draft programme, which are in keeping with our policy for the new era. Prompted by a sense of justice and responsibility towards youth, we reaffirm our confidence in their competence.

I should like to conclude by addressing myself directly to youth. I would renew the appeal that our President made on 1 July 1989 to the youth of the world:

> "The future of the world is in your hands. Please be its guarantors".

The Acting President: I call on the Permanent Representative of Morocco, Mr. Snoussi.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Since 1959, youth has received special attention in the General Assembly of the United Nations. The role of youth in promoting the ideals of peace and mutual understanding among peoples was recognized by the international community at the very height of the cold war, when distrust and antagonism governed international relations.

Today, the contribution of youth in the building of a peaceful, just and prosperous world is more necessary than ever. At a time when the innumerable problems of development have shown us clearly the inseparable link between development, democracy and human rights, we must recognize that youth can — and must — be involved in national and international endeavours to make the needed changes for global development and the progress of all humankind.

Youth throughout the world represent a human resource of fundamental importance. It is therefore up to us to develop their potential to the utmost and to promote their social integration, an indispensable condition for the global, harmonious and secure development of peoples and societies.

It was on the basis of these principles that the international community enthusiastically proclaimed 1985 as International Youth Year, in order to strengthen among young people the ideals of peace, understanding and cooperation and to open broad prospects for them to assert themselves as the agents and beneficiaries of their societies' socio-economic development.

The decade that was just passed, under the motto of "participation, development and peace", certainly recorded some achievements, especially in making international public opinion more aware of the problems of youth. Above all, it showed the determination of youth to assert themselves and to see their aspirations translated into deeds. The effective participation of the coming generation in the management of State affairs in the economic, social and political spheres serves to ensure that they will be able to enjoy all their rights and to carry out the duties deriving from those rights.

The problems of youth are all the more topical since the world's population, on the threshold of the third millennium, is increasing in an alarming way, in so far as there are now 1.3 billion youth. While the world does have immense resources — enough to ensure the expansion and the survival of human civilization — this demographic explosion highlights the responsibility of States to respond to the pressing needs of youth and ensure their full development in a sound and well-balanced social environment.

In a world in upheaval, extremist or defeatist trends are besieging and attracting youth, thereby diverting them from the ideals of peace and equality and leading them towards frustration, insecurity and distress. It is thus up to the international community to focus more intently on these problems, which are on the increase and hence giving rise to some concern as to the future of youth — a future clouded by threats of many kinds, including conflicts, intolerance and horrifying diseases. Furthermore, the emergence of new dangers that jeopardize the well-being and the very lives of youth, such as drug abuse, violence, delinquency and terrorism, constitute a source of serious concern for States, which, in order to protect youth from these serious scourges, must display ever greater far-sightedness, understanding and determination.

We cannot ignore the problem of unemployment which prevails, to varying degrees, in most countries, and which is often the source of many types of delinquency. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 100 million jobs will have to be created within the next 20 years in order to ensure that the youth of the world have appropriate jobs. This will be a challenge to all States.

Among the major changes taking place in the world, we need to give serious attention to the phenomenon of the breakdown of the family and the decline in moral values, which have grave repercussions on the stability, security and future of youth. Accordingly, it is imperative to preserve those moral values which have always played a foremost role in safeguarding the spiritual balance of young people, and in ensuring the strengthening of the family and its role as the basic cell of society?

This year, as we commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the international community must, more than ever before, promote among youth the ideals and objectives of the United Nations, in order to preserve future generations from scourges, armed conflict — both national and international — and violence.

With the rise of new forms of racism, intolerance and xenophobia, which affect youth first and foremost, and which often give rise to unfounded hostilities, aggression, violence, and fear on their part, it is vital that broad and sustained action be undertaken by the international community to put an end to these alarming phenomena. It is our duty to promote respect among youth for other civilizations, for other races, and for national and religious ethnic diversity. This must be done through a culture that advocates equality among young people and fosters closer links among the different peoples of the world.

In this respect, we believe that the introduction of human rights into school programmes is a step of great importance which should be encouraged, because it makes it possible to develop harmonious relations between communities based on tolerance, respect for the rights and dignity of others, and mutual comprehension and understanding. Such an initiative has been undertaken by Morocco — land of tolerance — which, faithful to its traditions and its ideals of equality and fraternity, is constantly striving to inculcate these principles in future generations.

Since its independence, our country has attached greatest importance to young people, to their education, their development, and their preparation to take up their responsibilities as free Moroccans, proud of their past and ready to defend the principles and values of their country, which for centuries have made it possible for them to live and feel proud of their civilization.

We are gratified by the consistent progress made in the development of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, which will undoubtedly contribute to overcoming the difficulties facing youth and their future.

We cannot talk about youth without raising the specific situation of young women and girls who continue in many societies to suffer the ills of a discrimination that condemns them to marginalization, thus depriving those societies of inestimable human potential.

Morocco, which in 1993 acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, stresses once again the importance that the international community must attach to the fate of these young women and girls, in order to devise solutions to the specific problems confronting them.

The response to the many challenges that we must meet in order to ensure the well-being of youth demands courage, understanding, and greater solidarity and humanism. It is only through this humanism that the world will succeed in meeting the wishes of youth who aspire to a decent and worthy life, free of war, of poverty and of suffering.

The Acting President: I now call on the Honourable K. K. Chambalo, M.P., Minister for Youth, Sports and Culture of Malawi.

Mr. Chambalo (Malawi): Malawi is situated in the southern part of Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to the south, Tanzania to the north and Zambia to the west. The demographic profile indicates that more than half the population is below the age of 25 years, clearly indicating that Malawi is a youthful nation. In spite of the numerical superiority of youth, their profile shows a lack of basic opportunities that has been compounded by the presence of a range of conditions that impinge on them, the predominant one being poverty.

Malawian youth face a host of challenges ranging from unemployment and inadequate relevant educational opportunities to HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse, and their non-involvement in decision-making, among others.

Poor formal and informal employment prospects for youth in Malawi are aggravated by inadequate relevant educational opportunities to prepare them for the challenges of after-school life. Low enrolment prior to the introduction of free primary education, and high school dropout rates, have left the bulk of the youth either illiterate or semi-literate.

The challenges Malawian youth face are not restricted only to education and employment, but extend also to factors that affect their health. There is increasing concern about the health of young people. From various research findings there is strong evidence of unprotected multiple sexual relationships among youth, leading to unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions. The 1992 Malawi demographic health survey revealed that among those under 20 years old, over one third had already entered the family formation pathway despite the risks of early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

The abuse of alcohol and other drugs has often implicated youth in unintentional injuries, violence and crime, thus damaging social relationships and leading to long-term illness and disability.

Mr. Ouane (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Young people have the potential to become a dynamic and positive force in shaping the future of all nations, including Malawi. Their economic, social and political empowerment is therefore paramount in addressing the challenges youth face. This, however, was not possible before 1994 in Malawi.

Malawi has had no explicit youth policy, although some programmes had been undertaken before. The previous leadership made some pronouncements about youth which became a rallying point for youth programmes; however, statements such as "Youth must be guided" and "Youth must respect their elders" only helped to silence the youth and any independent youth organizations. The defunct Malawi Young Pioneers Movement, the only youth body then, succeeded only in raising false hopes among youth through its make-believe youth programmes. The organization's political affiliation to the only party at that time totally eclipsed meaningful youth programmes which the Government attempted to implement.

The present Government of Malawi has made poverty alleviation central to its development programmes. This is in recognition of the effects of poverty on the challenges faced by young people. The poverty alleviation programme aims to enable every Malawian to have access to basic necessities and to be able to develop and exploit his or her full potential to lead a productive, dignified and creative life through social, economic and political empowerment. The vision of the programme is a transformed economy resulting in improved standards of living.

The Government has introduced free primary education to ensure that all children of school age go to school. This has resulted in a marked increase in enrolment. The Malawi Education For All programme, which the Government has also launched, will ensure that children, particularly girls, remain in school. The revision of school curricula to include more relevant subjects will enable young people to leave primary education, which is as far as many go, with skills they can use in their communities.

The ushering in of a democratic system of government in Malawi is a milestone in that it has opened up people's minds. People are free to associate with each other and form organizations of their own. This has led to the formation of many independent youth organizations working in various youth fields. Currently there are more than 10 independent youth organizations as opposed to none just a year ago. Most of these organizations were established and are managed by young people themselves.

Another milestone in the development of youth in Malawi is the development of the Malawi National Youth Policy. The Policy, which was drawn up with full consultation with young people, government organizations, the United Nations, donor agencies, the Commonwealth Youth Programme and others, aims to establish formally, clearly and firmly, as a distinct sector of government policy, the identity and status of Malawi youth and to create a direction for youth activities and programmes for various interest groups. Malawi's Policy defines youth as all young people, male and female, from 14 to 25 years of age. The Policy also seeks to address key challenges currently affecting youth, such as unemployment, education opportunities, young people's non-involvement in decision-making, AIDS and HIV, crime and general youth deviance, teenage pregnancy, and drug and alcohol abuse. The Policy also advocates the rights and responsibilities of young people and the positive role models provided by adults and parents.

Realizing the role of independent youth organizations in complementing government efforts in youth development, the Malawi Government will soon enact a youth council act for the establishment of a National Youth Council. The Council, a non-governmental organization, will have as its main functions the development, promotion, encouragement and coordination of youth activities on a national basis and will aim to facilitate and encourage cooperation among the various youth organizations.

As indicated earlier, Malawi believes that young people have the potential to become a dynamic and positive force. Given the right conditions, young women and men are both willing and able to take responsibility for their lives and contribute positively to the society in which they live, both now and in the future. Total empowerment of youth is therefore the biggest challenge for all. Malawi is committed to investing in young women and men, as they are the nation of today and tomorrow.

The Government is committed to providing appropriate skills to young people through its Multiskills Training Centres. The Malawi Youth Credit Initiative will ensure that young people are provided with credit and training packages to enable them to enter into viable small business. In line with the International Youth Year's theme of participation, development, peace, Malawi youth will be provided with limitless opportunity to participate in decision-making at all levels.

It is against this backdrop that Malawi supports the adoption of the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mrs. Uraiwan Pichitakul, Deputy Secretary-General of the National Youth Bureau of Thailand.

Mrs. Pichitakul (Thailand): In observance of International Youth Year in 1985, Thailand joined the international community in launching a number of programmes and activities for youth both at the local and the national levels. In the same year, the Thai Government also declared 20 September of every year to be Thai National Youth Day in memory of the two former great kings who began their reign while they were very young. In view of social, economic and demographic changes, many child and youth development problems still remain from our previous Sixth Child and Youth Development Five-Year Plan, 1987-1991. The Thai Government is therefore still addressing the significant dimensions of the problems and needs of child and youth development during our current Seventh Child and Youth Development Plan, 1992-1996.

During the past 10 years, we have followed up and evaluated our national youth policies and programmes and have amended laws to catch up with the situation of youth. We are now in the process of carrying out studies to lay down the guidelines for the next Child and Youth Development Five-Year Plan, 1997-2001.

As for the observance this year of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year we have organized a number of programmes such as the National Youth Forum, National Youth Week, a seminar on the role of youth in national development, workshops on Asia-Pacific youth and handicrafts, youth and tourism, and so on.

In conclusion, we believe that, with the continuing support of the United Nations, the situation of world youth will be improved. We are also convinced that the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond will be observed and largely implemented by all Member States for the development of the young generation of the world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Sudan, Mr. Mohamed.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Ten years ago, I was a student at university and was one of the members of this youth segment which we are discussing now. Among the representatives of youth to come to speak about youth in their countries, I am witness to the past 10-year period both in my country and in this Organization.

For the representatives of all countries of the world to meet to reflect on youth issues and to lay down plans and programmes for future generations is indeed an expression of the determination of the international community to pay special attention to this important segment which constitutes the heart and the aspirations of society for the future. The international conferences which have been held recently have devoted a great deal of space in their programme of action to the problems of youth. This highlights the increasing attention paid to this segment.

The commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year is an adequate opportunity to reflect and take stock of the situation and to prepare programmes and plans for future generations. The progress of nations can only be accomplished through relying on the vitality and the strength of youth who are aspiring for social changes and progressive renewal which contributes to the present and to the future. The vitality of a nation lies in the vitality of its youth. Therefore, we have to prepare them to shoulder this responsibility.

Youth welfare in Sudan is a public responsibility shouldered by the State, private bodies and youth organizations, together with families and individuals. The national strategy adopted by my country for the next 10 years had devoted a full chapter to youth. It enumerated the general principles for promoting youth activities, namely, the human aspect through the enjoyment of rights and fulfilling duties. It pointed out the principle of democracy built on equality among all sectors of youth, and adopting the scientific approach in theory and in practice; the principle of respect of work and its value as the essential factor in life; the principles of valuing life as a blessing of God Almighty; the principle of integration and equilibrium as it includes all the cultural, social and economic levels, and the principle of dialogue and exchanging views to promote the cohesion of Sudanese society and profound understanding of all contemporary generations.

The strategy has identified the following areas for youth. Firstly, in the cultural and intellectual area, as it constitutes the vision which guides youth in all areas; secondly, in the aesthetic field, art and literature are the essential pillars of culture; thirdly, science as the basis of progress in our present generation which is witnessing growing scientific progress; fourthly, sports and military fields; fifthly, public social service, and finally, the field of trips and touristic activities and hostels.

In the field of youth organizations, youth in Sudan are grouped under a wide umbrella, namely, the organization of the youth of the nation, in addition to student associations in universities and secondary schools in all the provinces of Sudan and in the field of education. In spite of the difficult economic circumstances, my country has also established during the last five years, 20 universities in all the provinces.

Basic education will be mandatory for all children of school age, starting from next year. These new universities are spread all over the provinces and include girls and boys. For example, the number of girl students in Sudanese universities is more than 60 per cent of that of young men.

In the field of training, my country has established a number of vocational training centres in addition to clubs and associations and youth organizations and national non-governmental organizations. In the field of combating crime, drugs and vice, youth in Sudan are imbued with the virtues of the teachings of Islam. Those values are deeply rooted in Islam which condemns delinquency and calls for cooperation and compassion in society.

Finally, I should like to point out that 85 per cent of the world's youth live in developing countries which are burdened with foreign debts and poverty, lack of financial resources and disease. Therefore, the majority of world youth, most of whom live in developing countries, do not face the problems of reproductive health or any other abnormalities. What they really face are intricate economic problems which threaten their future. When tackling youth issues, we should focus on the problems of young people themselves and not focus on other issues which are not connected with youth.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on Mr. Fabrizio Macor-Pellisero, Director for Youth, Ministry of Family Affairs of Venezuela.

Mr. Macor-Pellisero (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Young people are fundamental in building the present and the future of society — above all its present. None the less, it is clear that, to a great extent, they are shut out of the opportunities offered by society as regards education, employment, health, recreation, food, access to an appropriate physical environment, human rights, participation in the decision-making process and possibilities for association.

Hence, the draft Declaration of Intent on Youth refers to: attainment of an educational level commensurate with their aspirations; access to employment opportunities equal to their abilities; food and nutrition adequate for full participation in the life of society; a physical and social environment that promotes health and protection from disease and addiction; human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion; participation in decision-making processes, including the right voluntarily to join representative and democratic youth organizations; and places and facilities for cultural and sports activities to improve the living standards of young people.

In Venezuela, one of the areas in which youth are most often left on the sidelines is education. Access to education does not measure up to the expectations of young people. In fact, in Venezuela 40.5 per cent of young people are engaged in study, and only 4.2 per cent of those who are not studying feel that they have completed their education. This situation is an important source of frustration among young people, and it can be attributed to the combined effect of high educational expectations and of the difficulties involved in obtaining schooling.

According to the poll on youth conducted by the Ministry of Family Affairs, the reasons for not studying are diverse. Economic considerations are the most important of these, affecting 50 per cent of young people; 27.5 per cent say that they left school because of lack of resources, and 23.1 per cent because they needed to work. Another important, and interesting factor is that the educational system is not highly valued. In the case of 13.6 per cent of young people, this is a reason for cessation of studies. Poor performance combined with other problems is the reason given by 11.3 per cent of young people who say that they are not studying, and lack of school availability applies to 8.8 per cent. Health problems affect 3.3 per cent, and pregnancy 5.7 per cent.

In the second half of 1994 the national labour force comprised approximately 8 million persons, a quarter of them young people. However, whereas the overall rate of unemployment was 8.5 per cent, the rate for young people was 15.5 per cent. In other words, the number of unemployed young people was 1.8 times that of unemployed adults in general.

Young people are in an unfavourable situation in other areas too. But the important thing is that there be solutions and policies that can be applied. In the case of the State of Venezuela, the policies directed towards the youth sector can be divided into two major groups: those intended to deal with the problem of integrating youth — policies through which Venezuela can assume its responsibilities towards young people; and those relating to the participation of young people, for building society through the involvement of youth.

The Ministry of Family Affairs is the guiding body for policies designed to care for families and their members. At the beginning of the 1990s we promoted the development of youth policies and programmes geared towards creating valid options to deal with the problems of that sector of the population. As a country, we were innovative in developing programmes for the socio-cultural participation of young people, and at present we are using our experience by adapting programmes as necessary.

A clear demonstration of the importance that the Government of President Caldera attaches to the problems of young people is the establishment of a governmental forum to deal with youth issues and to support the activities of the Ministry of Family Affairs. Likewise, there is a range of specialized institutions dealing with different aspects of the problems of youth.

Activities in the field of youth have priority in the nation's current plan as part of its development process. These are undertaken through various programmes. In the field of education, we have formal programmes for basic, intermediate, professional, technical and university training. By way of support for formal education, we have a programme of student tutors.

In the area of health, let me emphasize our programmes of comprehensive health care, the mental health assistance programme for children and young people, the programme for the prevention of grade repetition, school leaving and poor school performance, the programme for the prevention of accidents and violence and the national programme for the prevention of early pregnancy.

In the area of job training and qualification, a number of activities have been undertaken through various programmes carried out by different national and regional bodies; these include our adolescent and youth training and qualification programme; and the social integration programme for young people, which began in 1992. In 1995, help is being given to 45,000 young people between 15 and 27 who are uneducated, poor and unemployed or with precarious employment. This programme puts strong emphasis on comprehensive training, and it encourages the inclusion of young people in adult training systems or in the job market.

We also have a programme of job training for youths, which is at an experimental stage. Financed by the Inter-American Development Bank, this programme is aimed at developing, on an experimental basis, the outlines for the training, labour, business and follow-up components of a national system of youth incorporation. It offers equivalency courses to young people between the ages of 18 and 24 in the Caracas metropolitan area — a very sensitive area of our country — who have had less than nine years of schooling, are uneducated and live in poverty.

Our training programmes are of special importance, because they involve the business community and society in general; it is thus, and especially through non-governmental organizations, that we are creating a network of unified training organizations to meet the national requirements for the training of young people on the basis of shared responsibility.

In the area of prevention also we have a set of programmes to provide opportunities for young people in extreme poverty, with the object of reducing the trend towards disorder. These include the preventive programme for young people, the programme for youth participation and associations, the preventive programme for minors and programmes for abandoned and endangered minors. We also have a State body for sports policy. Among the most important innovations is the use of sports policy as a preventive policy through programmes for performance in sports, for competitive sports, sports for all, sports for health and recreational sports.

We also have a programme of youth rehabilitation and supervised recreation. This programme, run by various bodies under the Ministry of Family Affairs, makes it possible to safeguard integral child development, making efficient use of resources and services required by communities, and facilitates school enrolment.

Drug prevention programmes are particularly important for a country like ours. Aimed to confront this terrible scourge, the Ministry of Family Affairs established the José Félix Ricas Foundation in 1986 for prevention, rehabilitation and scientific research into the use and abuse of narcotic and psychotropic substances. This work is geared especially towards people between the ages of 7 and 25. The Ministry develops programmes in three areas — treatment, prevention and research — with direct support from governmental organizations and from communities. It has been taking preventive action through workshops in marginal urban areas.

In the cultural area, one of our great successes has been the programme of national youth and children's orchestras, which brings together 110,000 young children in 196 groups throughout the country, and 80,000 older youths through the system of youth orchestras. Its contribution to training, direction and evaluation of musical training is part of our policy of prevention in respect of youth, just as the system of youth and children's orchestras is a part of our policy of integral development.

Venezuela's concern with various types of human resources training for national development is indicated by the creation of the Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation, through which highly qualified personnel are trained at home and abroad, as well as at the national level.

With regard to future prospects, Venezuela has deep-seated democratic convictions which oblige us to address our economic and social problems in a spirit of compromise and to open up new opportunities for young people and give them new hope. The daily exercise of freedom is a challenge to our capacity for innovation, as is the commitment to knowledge and information that makes us a society that is always learning: learning to work; learning to do research; learning to compete and cooperate, and to create a constant new capacity for learning.

Poverty is a barrier to opportunity, but it can also be a challenge to create options for a different world. Nevertheless, we must not forget that, today, the community and international cooperation require the development of different options, in spite of the difficulties that the countries of our region confront, and especially in spite of the risks posed by hedonistic values and a consumer society to youthful dreams.

President Caldera, in a recent statement in this forum, recalled the major challenges we face. We must create; we must build; we must innovate. Today the words of Simón Rodríguez, the teacher of the Liberator Simón Bolívar, are more significant than ever: "We must invent or fail."

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the representative of Egypt, Mr. Eldeeb.

Mr. Eldeeb (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: We meet today to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year — in confirmation of the interest of our Governments in the issues of youth who are the core of the social movement in each society.

Youth are the leaders of the future and they are the focus of our hope in achieving a society characterized by social peace and political stability in a world which enjoys peace and security in a framework of tolerance and goodwill and collaboration that would lead to the establishment of a new world order on the basis of the objectives set forth by the United Nations Charter 50 years ago.

Youth constitute the creative element in every society and perform a basic role in the comprehensive development process at both the social and economic levels. Therefore, the international community should discharge its obligations towards youth by paying sufficient heed to the international programmes that aim at raising living standards and providing education opportunities, employment and health care for youth in order to enable them fully to participate in the lives of their societies. This can be achieved only by providing an environment that would lead to the achievement of the socio-economic development needed to enable society to overcome the hurdles that prevent the youth of any society from obtaining their fundamental requirements.

Therefore, the United Nations should focus on addressing the fundamental economic issues of youth and channel more assistance to the developing and, especially, the least developed countries, so that they may put in place genuine socio-economic development programmes and help the Governments of those countries provide basic food, education and health care and housing as well as productive employment opportunities for youth instead of ignoring those important issues and putting forward controversial issues like the freedom of sexual and reproductive relations and other such issues which the youth of our countries do not need to dwell on.

Therefore, we hope to see United Nations programmes of international cooperation in the area of youth focus on the genuine requirements of youth, in our developing countries so that the credibility of international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations becomes a reality.

Our high-level meeting today results from General Assembly resolution 49/152 which my delegation joined in sponsoring. This high-level meeting was preceded by a long process of preparation that began within the framework of the Social Development Commission and the delegation of Egypt had the honour of presiding over the open-ended working group on youth which laid down the foundation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The report of the working group was referred to the Committee which commended it and referred it to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session 1995 (document E/1995/24) in order to finalize the last part and refer it to the General Assembly for consideration during this high-level meeting as a prelude to its adoption it in accordance with the aforementioned General Assembly resolution.

The Economic and Social Council held its resumed substantive session on 25 October 1995 in order to consider the final draft of the international programme for youth but, unfortunately, the Council was unable during that session to reach consensus on the content of document E/1995/123. Therefore, the Council decided to refer the question in its entirety to the General Assembly to consider and take the necessary measures.

Let us face this situation with courage and speak with candour. The draft Working Programme of Action for Youth, in its general framework, is a good one that deserves support by all. Yet, the few controversial paragraphs which have been inserted recently include a new formulation that goes beyond the international drafting which was adopted in the aforementioned conferences. In particular, we refer to the three paragraphs numbered 56, 57, 58 in the draft text which deal with the sexual and reproductive issues in a manner that overlooks a basic fact which should be respected. This fact is that various legal systems are applied in various countries and in different regions of the world. Such a fact underscores the need to respect and to take into consideration the historic religious and cultural characteristics of the peoples of every region when drafting any international document, so that the door may not be left ajar for the introduction of controversial issues after international compromises had been reached on such issues in previous conferences.

During the negotiating process the delegation of Egypt spared no effort in trying to ensure that the wording of the final draft of the World Programme of Action for Youth was going to reflect the international consensus which was reached at the Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994 on the international issues related to sexual and reproductive issues as they are recorded in the report of that Conference.

Unfortunately, this did not materialize, owing to the insistence of some parties in the negotiation process on imposing a new concept of consensus. The delegation of Egypt would like to avail itself of this opportunity to stress that whatever the linguistic formulas may be, its concept of the operative content of the paragraphs relating to reproductive and sexual health, especially paragraphs 56, 57 and 58, is that their implementation will take place in accordance with the legal system and the cultural and religious heritage of each society. Therefore, Egypt will apply the content of these paragraphs in accordance with the rules of Islamic Shariah and the basic legal rules in force in Egypt.

Youth in all Member States is looking to us. Therefore the General Assembly should perform its role to the full. We meet today at the level of a high-level international conference which, we believe, could yield fruitful results if we begin immediately to tackle the pending issues which are few in number, with the usual international procedure. That is, we should consider the contents of the draft World Programme of Action in this Assembly in a transparent, democratic fashion that would lead to genuine consensus in accordance with the rules of United Nations international conferences.

The delegation of Egypt wishes to propose, at this point, the convening today of an open-ended consultation meeting under the leadership of the President or a Vice-President of the Assembly so that the General Assembly may consider the draft of the World Programme of Action in a first reading, since the draft has not yet been considered by the General Assembly in a first reading. This is the customary procedure followed in all international conferences before the adoption of any international programme. The aim would be to revise the few points that call for revision in the controversial paragraphs, so that the Assembly may consider the final draft of the World Programme of Action at its high-level meeting with a view to adopting it by consensus.

We are confident that there is a real opportunity for us to overcome the problem of redrafting the few controversial paragraphs I have mentioned. This could be done simply by adhering to the language that was agreed after painstaking efforts at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as contained in the report of that Conference, without in any way introducing any controversial wording or concepts.

Egypt devotes special attention to youth issues and accords them top priority in its public policy and the various executive programmes of the Government that aim at achieving social integration and at raising the standard of living of all segments of society. The Egyptian Government has adopted an ambitious programme to combat poverty and achieve comprehensive social development on the occasion of the 1996 International Year to Eradicate Poverty. All organs of the Government now cooperate in the implementation of this development programme and elicit the participation of all non-governmental organizations engaged in voluntary work in this field. In this context, Egypt urges the international community to consolidate all international cooperation programmes that aim at youth welfare, especially in developing countries, in order to help those countries carry out their programmes in reaffirmation of international interest in youth issues throughout the world.

While on the subject of youth issues, we should refer to the importance of devoting special attention to the neediest categories of society, especially the handicapped and those who live in rural areas in which only basic services are available to the young, as well as the inhabitants of areas with particular difficulties, such as those under occupation and those afflicted by armed conflicts.

In conclusion, we hope that the year 2000, to which the World Programme of Action is looking, will see the resolution of all youth priority issues through concerted international efforts and through the cooperation of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies with the Governments of Member States, and with the real and effective participation of non-governmental organizations so that the goals we set at the world Summit, including the integration of young people in the activities of their societies may be achieved as we approach the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker for today's meeting devoted to the celebration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform Members that, as it appears that further consultation on the draft World Programme of Action is needed, action on the draft will therefore be taken at a later date, to be announced.

I will now adjourn this meeting and proceed immediately to the special briefing by non-governmental youth organizations to hear the remaining speakers.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.45

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

45th plenary meeting

Tuesday, 31 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 48

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The Acting President: I should like to inform representatives that following consultations regarding agenda item 48, on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), and taking into account General Assembly decision 49/408 of 3 November 1994, it is proposed that the General Assembly decide to postpone consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session.

May I take it therefore that the Assembly, taking into account decision 49/408, wishes to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-first session?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 48.

Agenda item 16

Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections:

(c) Election of seven members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination: note by the Secretary-General (A/50/209)

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly decision 42/450 of 17 December 1987, the Assembly elects the members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination upon their nomination by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly has before it document A/50/209, which contains the nominations by the Economic and Social Council to fill the vacancies in the Committee which will occur as a result of the expiration on 31 December 1995 of the terms of office of China, Egypt, Japan, Kenya, Nicaragua, the Republic of Korea and Togo. Those States are eligible for immediate re-election.

I should like to remind members that after 1 January 1996 the following States will still be members of the Committee: Argentina, Bahamas, Belarus, Benin, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Therefore, those 27 States are not eligible in this election.

The following States have been nominated by the Economic and Social Council: three African States for

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three vacancies — Egypt, Togo and Zaire; three Asian States for three vacancies — China, Japan and the Republic of Korea; and one Latin American and Caribbean State for one vacancy — Uruguay.

The number of States nominated from among the African States, the Asian States, and the Latin America and Caribbean States corresponds to the number of seats to be filled in each of those regions.

In accordance with rule 92 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure, all elections should be held by secret ballot. However, in accordance with paragraph 16 of decision 34/401, the Assembly may, in elections to subsidiary organs, dispense with secret balloting when the number of candidates corresponds to the number of seats to be filled.

Accordingly, may I take it that the Assembly wishes to declare those States nominated by the Economic and Social Council — namely; China, Japan, Egypt, the Republic of Korea, Togo, Uruguay and Zaire — elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination for a three-year term beginning on 1 January 1996?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I congratulate the States which have been elected members of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

This concludes our consideration of sub-item (c) of agenda item 16.

Agenda item 45

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/517)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.7/Rev.1)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/50/700)

The Acting President: I call on the representative of Mexico to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.7/Rev.1.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsor countries, the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.7/Rev.1, entitled "Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador".

After years of violence and uncertainty, El Salvador has now reached the stage of consolidating the peace process, building and strengthening political, economic and social institutions and improving structures for harnessing, through dialogue and reason, the pluralism and differences inherent in all contemporary societies.

With the support of the United Nations, Salvadorans carried out an intensive negotiating process that culminated in the signing of the Peace Agreement at Chapultepec. At that time the stage of implementation and verification was initiated, with the assistance of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) from 1991 to 1995 and, as of 1 May 1995, with that of the Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL).

The draft resolution before the Assembly makes reference to the most recent resolutions and reports relating to the situation in El Salvador. It recognizes with satisfaction the continuing evolution of El Salvador into a democratic and peaceful nation. It also acknowledges the contributions made by Member States for the functioning of the Mission. The draft resolution welcomes the continued commitment of the Government and the people of El Salvador to the consolidation of the peace process. It praises the work done by MINUSAL and the Secretary-General. It recognizes the political commitment of the Government of El Salvador and other parties to complete the implementation of the agreements.

On that basis, the draft resolution approves the Secretary-General's proposal to extend MINUSAL's mandate, with a gradual reduction of its strength and costs in a manner compatible with the efficient performance of its functions. Finally, it calls on Member States and international institutions to continue to provide El Salvador with assistance and support in the consolidation of peace and development.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1 are convinced that its adoption would demonstrate the international community's renewed commitment to peace, stability and development in El Salvador. We are confident that the Assembly will give the draft resolution its full support, and we strongly recommend that it be adopted.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The European Union has taken note of the report (A/50/517) of the Secretary-General of 6 October 1995 on El Salvador and, in particular, on the role of the new Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL).

The mediation process, the determination of the parties and the commitment to peace of the people of El Salvador, assisted by the presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) and the work of the Group of Friends, made it possible to put an end to the bloody civil conflict in El Salvador. This historic success was enshrined in the Chapultepec agreements of January 1992. During the past few years, we have witnessed with satisfaction the transition in El Salvador from a conflict situation to one of peace and reconciliation.

Today the population of El Salvador as a whole is deeply involved in the process of normalizing the country's political life, which will make it possible to lay the foundations of a stable democracy in a climate of peace and development.

The European Union congratulates the Government of El Salvador and the other political forces in the country for the progress achieved in complying with the provisions of the Chapultepec peace agreements and the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth.

El Salvador must continue to receive assistance from the international community. The presence of MINUSAL since 1 May 1995 — first under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Enrique ter Horst, whose work we wish to praise, and now under that of Mr. Ricardo Vigil — has enabled the United Nations to continue to exercise its good offices and has helped inspire confidence in the ongoing process of consolidating progress through the strengthening of El Salvador's democratic institutions as well as in the full implementation of the peace agreements.

The European Union supports MINUSAL's presence in El Salvador, which contributes effectively to overcoming the obstacles still in the way of the full implementation of the peace agreements. It therefore agrees with the Secretary-General's proposal — included in the draft resolution (A/50/L.7/Rev.1) before us, which was just introduced by the representative of Mexico — to extend MINUSAL's mandate for six months, with a gradual reduction of its strength and costs in a manner compatible with the effective performance of its duties.

We consider this necessary, not only because of the important and encouraging political message this decision will send to El Salvador, but also because we are concerned that some aspects of the peace agreements are not being fully implemented and others have been subject to considerable delays. Swifter progress is needed in order to avoid weakening the peace process and causing political and social instability.

The European Union wishes to stress the importance of implementing reforms in the judicial system, in particular the legislative reforms required for the implementation of the binding recommendations of the Commission on the Truth, as well as in the electoral sphere and in the human-settlement and land-transfer programmes.

Furthermore, the increase in delinquency, especially the organized kind, and the deterioration of public security are elements of concern. Efforts to counter delinquency must be made in conjunction with the institutional development of the National Civil Police and the National Public Security Academy. The concept of a national civil police force, as embodied in the peace agreements, must be preserved and sustained. To this end, the European Union is providing technical and financial assistance to these mechanisms.

The draft resolution which the General Assembly has before it today, and which we trust will be adopted by consensus, clearly shows the political will of the international community to consolidate the recent achievements of the people of El Salvador through the full implementation of the peace agreements.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/50/700.

Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that the following countries have become co-sponsors of draft resolution

A/50/L.7/Rev.1: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 50/7).

The Acting President: I call on the representative of El Salvador.

Mr. Castaneda (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The development of events in Central America has been considered by the Security Council and, in particular, the General Assembly since 1983, when the agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives" was introduced and more directly since the signing of the Esquipulas II agreements in 1987 and the commitments adopted at the El Salvador Summit in February 1989, when our Governments agreed to ask the United Nations to take the necessary steps to put into operation a mechanism for the verification of the commitments aimed at securing a political solution to the regional crisis. This then took the form of various initiatives which were developed in the field and which led to progress in the peace process, thus moving us away from confrontation and towards efforts to consolidate a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

The initiatives aimed at finding a political solution to the armed conflict in El Salvador were also taken in their context. We should recall that in December 1990 both the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para Liberación Nacional (FMLN) asked the Secretary-General to exercise his good offices in the search for peace. His participation in the negotiations was then formally established in the Geneva agreement of 4 April 1990.

Since then, negotiations have been held with the assistance and good offices of the Secretary-General, directly or through his Special Representative. This launched the widest possible process for the maintenance of peace in Central America, and a mechanism was introduced to monitor implementation of the agreements resulting from the negotiations — the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), initially with the limited task of verifying the San José Agreement on Human Rights of July 1990, and then with the more extensive task of verifying implementation of the peace agreements of January 1992 which ended the armed conflict, and subsequently to begin the consolidation of peace and democratization, thereby achieving national reconciliation and the integral development of our country in an atmosphere of full respect for human rights.

As we are all aware, the implementation of the peace agreements and the progress made to that end were the basis for ending ONUSAL's mandate. However, it was also felt that a reduced United Nations presence should be maintained to continue observing and verifying the implementation of pending commitments.

To that end, once ONUSAL's mandate terminated, in April 1995, provision was made for the new Mission of the United Nations in El Salvador (MINUSAL), which came into operation as of 1 May 1995, to continue the verification functions and exercise its good offices until there is full implementation of the peace agreements.

In respect of the pending commitments, I believe it is appropriate to remind this Assembly that in October 1995 we reached an agreement between the political parties and other competent institutions making it possible to appoint the Inspector General of the new National Civil Police, in accordance with the peace agreements. We have also continued to implement the land transfer programme and the programme to reintegrate former combatants from both parties into the civilian and institutional life of our country, thereby demonstrating the concern and firm political will of the Government of El Salvador fully to comply with the commitments in the peace agreements.

It should be pointed out, in relation to the strengthening of the National Civil Police, that MINUSAL requested the President of the Republic to evaluate the present situation of public security in our country. The request also contained a proposal and recommendations for improvements in this area, which also shows the work being done and the level of confidence that has been earned by MINUSAL.

The process of transforming El Salvador's society from a semi-authoritarian and semi-democratic political system into a modern democratic political system with full respect for the human, political, social, civil and economic rights of all members of our society has been a national effort for the most part, but it would not have been possible to achieve this in the time in which we have done so without the good offices of the Secretary-General as an intermediary, the resolute support of the entire United Nations system, and the cooperation and timely solidarity of the international community. We therefore would like again to express our great appreciation and gratitude.

We are pleased that the Assembly has now adopted draft resolution A/50/L.7/Rev.1 by consensus because this confirms the commitment by the United Nations to the consolidation of peace and democratization in El Salvador, and to continued support by the international community for the efforts made by our people and our Government to achieve a future of peace and prosperity for all Salvadorans.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 45.

Agenda item 105 *(continued)*

Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family: Commemoration to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Greece.

Mr. Kaskarelis (Greece): Last Friday, the representative of Spain delivered a statement on behalf of the European Union. Greece fully subscribes to the contents of that statement. I would like, however, to elaborate on some issues which are of particular interest to my delegation.

The year 2000 lies ahead of us. To be young and live at the end of the twentieth century is to witness a process of constant change all over the world and, at the same time, to encounter a cruelly competitive cultural, social, economic and political reality.

On the other hand, Governments responsible for the realization of a youth policy in their respective countries are well aware that youth problems have nowadays escaped the narrow geographical borders of their States. Problems tend to be common to all young people on the planet.

In this framework, the concluding triptych of strategies of the 1985 International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, still remains critical and needs urgent implementation through both national and international programmes.

In a world witnessing rapid socio-economic change and a deepening of the differences between developed and developing countries, the most affected part of the population is youth, or "the forgotten quarter", as it is described by UNICEF. It is this part of the population which not only reflects the problems of contemporary societies but also projects the image of the future world. Therefore, it is by addressing the concerns, the needs, the desires and the dreams of the youth of today that we will build a safer and healthier world for tomorrow.

There should be a specific approach to addressing the specific problems of the youth population. Measures should be taken to combat increased juvenile delinquency, drug abuse and youth marginalization. Urgent measures are also needed against female infanticide, sale of children and organs, child prostitution, child pornography and all forms of sexual abuse. New policies should be introduced to protect working children from exploitation and hazardous conditions that endanger their physical and mental development.

The lack of adequate opportunities for education, training and employment and poor facilities and services are factors which can fuel social exclusion and marginalization; therefore they should be eliminated.

Youth, being more vulnerable to disadvantages from which our society is suffering, should be especially protected in priority areas such as health services, nutrition, education, safe water and adequate sanitation.

In a world of increased tensions and multiplying points of conflict, special care should be taken to protect and assist children in war areas and to rehabilitate children traumatized by war and natural disasters.

Specific programmes should be studied and effectuated in order to combine efforts for a better environment with endeavours for a better future for our children, to whom this future mostly belongs.

We join our voice to that of other countries in the world, for: active cooperation between governmental authorities and non-governmental organizations; strengthening of ties between Member States of the United Nations, in the knowledge that it is only through solidarity that we can resolve pressing problems facing youth all over the world; urgent, universal ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; universal signature of the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children, as well as its effective implementation; and intensification of the role of non-governmental organizations in the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We salute the United Nations initiative of dedicating meetings of the General Assembly's fiftieth session to commemorating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, and we are certain that this endeavour will result in many fruitful proposals concerning youth.

It is only by meeting young people's needs and aspirations that we can ensure a better future for all of us.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Butler (Australia): Last week the General Assembly convened in special meetings to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Those meetings saw the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government ever held. The past was reviewed but, more important, the focus was on the future.

It is deeply appropriate that as our first action thereafter we celebrate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, because it is the youth of today who will carry us into the next half-century of the United Nations and beyond.

While there is much to do at the local and national levels, it is also vital that we address the issues of youth at the international level. There is also much we must do globally to improve the situation of youth. They have an important role to play at the international level. Youth themselves are at the forefront of the ongoing process of the globalization of our world. Youth everywhere must be encouraged to expand their links in international cooperation and communication.

We have a responsibility to create an enabling environment in which our best resources can flourish. We need to create a world for youth characterized by equality of opportunity, freedom from hunger and poverty, freedom from violence and discrimination in all its forms, and freedom from the threats of environmental degradation and nuclear weapons. These issues are of great concern to the youth of Australia, as they are to those of other countries. And we must increasingly act together to address the specific problems of youth related to health, employment, drug abuse and delinquency — issues addressed in the World Programme of Action for Youth.

We can only be successful in meeting these challenges by including the contributions of youth in building and designing their futures and providing them with the opportunity to participate and express themselves freely.

The challenges the world faces today are clearly different from those we faced 10 years ago, at the time of International Youth Year. The recent major conferences and summits of the United Nations in the areas of women, social development, human rights, population, environment and development among others, have gone a long way towards gathering momentum and identifying actions to address those issues. The resulting programmes and platforms for action have as much, if not more, relevance for today's youth as they do for all others. It is imperative that we now fulfil our commitments made at those conferences by taking action. The draft World Programme of Action for Youth is an important adjunct to the framework of future activities set out in the outcomes of those recent major conferences. In our work to implement those outcomes we must continue to bear in mind the importance of youth.

The World Programme of Action on Youth must also be a part of our national policies on youth. As expressed in the World Programme, it is important that Governments formulate and adopt national youth policies, as a means of addressing youth-related concerns.

Australia's youth social justice strategy was introduced to provide a special focus on youth in the Government's broader social justice strategy, which aims at developing a fairer, more prosperous and just society for all and is directed at expanding choices and opportunities to permit full participation in society, and to enable all to determine the direction of their own lives.

Australian Government policy focuses primarily on the provision of assistance and support to all young people in relation to employment, education and training, financial assistance, housing, health and a number of other issues specifically impacting upon young people.

Principal features of Australia's youth policies are: the youth training initiative, which aims to assist early school-leavers through an early intervention strategy and by providing access to case management; labour market programmes and a youth training allowance for unemployed 15- to 17-year-olds; Austudy, which aims to provide the financial assistance necessary for young people attempting to exercise their right to an education; pilot programmes targeting young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming so; and special pilot projects designed to establish best practice in youth suicide prevention.

We are now one year into the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and it is our hope that the activities of the Decade will have a particular impact on improving the situation of the world's indigenous youth. A high proportion of Australia's aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are young. By the start of the 1990s, the median age for our aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was under 20 years of age, compared with over 30 years of age for the Australian population as a whole. This indicates that the heaviest burden of the disadvantages faced by our indigenous population are borne by its youth. The legacy of past injustices is still evident in disturbing indicators of poor health, lower educational and employment status, and disproportionately high levels of incarceration.

The Australian Government is comprehensively seeking to address the situation of its indigenous youth across a range of processes and programmes, including specific strategies in the areas of education, health services, in particular for the homeless, employment and training, sport and recreation, and youth access. We consider that the International Decade provides an additional framework for our own strong national efforts within which to achieve measurable and sustainable progress in partnership with our indigenous communities.

That is the central reality — partnership. It is only in partnership with our youth that we can hope to achieve real progress in realizing the goals of International Youth Year: the goals of participation, development and peace, and a better society for all toward the year 2000 and beyond.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Mofokeng (South Africa): It is with boundless joy that the South African delegation addresses this special session of the General Assembly commemorating the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

The youth in my country epitomize change and liberty. The Government of National Unity declared 16 June as a "Day of the Youth". That day symbolizes the uprising of the youth against the evil system of apartheid, which was found in my country. It was on the occasion of celebrating that day that President Mandela announced the establishment of the President's Children Fund — a trust fund aimed at providing poverty-stricken and street children with resources that will ameliorate, if not annihilate, their miseries.

Many Ministries of the Government of National Unity have appointed youth sector representatives to advise and oversee efforts aimed at youth empowerment. Last November youth delegates from all corners of my country assembled at the behest of the Government of National Unity. The object of that meeting was to give young men and women a chance to shape the Government's approach to youth matters. For the first time in the history of policy-making in South Africa, the Government met with youth representatives from the political organizations, non-governmental organizations, youth clubs, student organizations and other bodies.

The Government was told that each and every programme aimed at youth empowerment must be underscored by the principle of youth centrality. Aptly put, youth must be involved in all the stages leading towards, and after, the adoption of such policies and programmes — that is, during the consultation, design and implementation periods.

Most developing countries are faced with a multiplicity of socio-economic problems that result in unemployment, lack of vocational skills, illiteracy, economic stagnation, and other difficulties. Although these problems affect all sectors of the population, young men and women are the most hard hit.

It is our sincere belief that if there is to be any intervention, it should aim at addressing all these problems simultaneously, in a systematic and realistic manner. Furthermore, my Government has taken a conscious decision to target youth and women as the primary beneficiaries of its reconstruction and development programme. Already youth are conspicuous in their participation in various projects, not only as beneficiaries but also as policy-makers and managers.

It is worth noting that in many countries there are still structural limitations, within different socio-economic formations, inhibiting youth development, such as obsolete values, policies and regulations. Governments must open avenues for young people so that they can participate fully in every aspect of life.

To the young men and women of the world my delegation would like to say that identifying problems is one element in solving them. The other part is seizing the initiative by rising above the problems. Correctly put, it is high time for young men and women to take their rightful place in the struggle against problems that affect humanity — whether women's issues, drugs, environmental issues, sustainable development, or any other matter. We need to see cooperation between young people in developing countries and between young people from developing and from developed countries.

It is said that the youth are the leaders of tomorrow, but often they are never given a chance to occupy meaningful positions today to prepare themselves to lead their respective communities. Let the youth give meaning to these words by preparing to lead their communities.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Andorra.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*interpretation from French*): I have the pleasure and the great honour of being the youngest ambassador and permanent representative accredited to the United Nations. It is therefore natural that I should speak today in this General Assembly meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. Moreover, this is an opportunity that the Principality of Andorra holds dear for many reasons. First, Andorra is a country with an age pyramid rather different from those of the other States of Western Europe. The ratio of young people in the total population is much greater in our country than in neighbouring States. We are therefore well aware of the problems and challenges facing youth today. Secondly, the Principality of Andorra is the author of one of the commitments of the Heads of State and Government included in the Final Declaration of the Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in March this year:

> "[We heads of State and Government will] encourage the contribution of people of all age groups as equally and vitally important for the building of a harmonious society, and foster dialogue between generations in all parts of society". (A/CONF.166/9, paras. 25 and 29, *Commitment 4(h)*)

This commitment encompasses all generations. One might think that something that is open to everyone concerns no one. To the contrary, we in the Principality of Andorra believe that it is extremely useful to appraise the question of youth as part of a multi-generational whole. The world of human beings is a dialogue between individuals and between groups of individuals — groups determined by people's liking for one cause or another. There is therefore dialogue between rich and poor, between one ethnic group and another, between architects and engineers, or between any other groups of human beings.

However, one of the oldest dialogues between groups of people is that between generations — the transmission of wisdom and accumulated knowledge between the old and the young. The human race has developed through dialogue between generations. Although this must be preserved, we must prevent it from becoming a monologue, for, while what our ancestors pass on to us is wisdom, roots and knowledge, it is possible to contribute to the perpetuation of errors.

Indeed, at a time when young people are killing each other in Bosnia and other places — when, after decades of shared life, new generations are massacring each other on the pretext of past religious or other grudges — the indications are that dialogue between generations has not worked, that young people have not used their ability as human beings to understand, analyse and say no to the irrational struggles that have been inculcated by their elders.

Young people must be given every opportunity to distinguish between kindness and cruelty, between the rational and the irrational, between good and evil, following the logic of tolerance and freedom of the individual. This can be achieved only through education. It is therefore essential that the education systems of our world communicate the message of peace and tolerance. Young men and young women, despite their individual characteristics, are very impressionable beings — some more so than others — and are therefore especially susceptible to ideologies and fanaticism, both in terms of their capacity to absorb information and by way of imitation.

If we want the generations of the third millennium to be worthy of being called "human", it is imperative that the United Nations continue its efforts in the field of education, through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other worthy bodies. Today, at the end of the twentieth century, we are well placed to want thoughtful education which will communicate to the young the values of the past but will also enable them to guard against the mistakes of those who have gone before them and give pride of place to reason and tolerance.

Since I am speaking about tolerance, in this anniversary year dedicated to tolerance, I should like to recall some words of my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Manuel Mas Ribo, a few weeks ago in the general debate:

> "Tolerance is limited only by intolerance." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 14th meeting, p. 15*)

Far too many young people are today victims of intolerance. By virtue of the colour of their skin or their birth, sex, religion, views or any other condition arising from their personal or social situation, they are unable to explore their freedom as individuals or enjoy the possibilities that life offers. We must see to it that an end is put to discrimination, especially the most insidious type of discrimination — that which comes from the nearest sources and which often drives young people to desperate action or, when there is no other motivation, to suicide. In fact, in the case of young people, suicide is always an indication of the failure of society to integrate them.

Although it is true that all the ills to which I have just referred affect other age groups too, it should not be forgotten that if we could manage to check them among young people we should avoid their repetition in the future.

So far, I have referred to what is needed to enable young people to reach their full human potential — that is, the sum total of the values of tolerance and reason which their education must provide and which is therefore our concern. In addition, young people must be able to make constructive use in society of what they have learnt. This is something that can be imparted to them only up to a certain point; they must themselves make the effort to become part of society and not to despair.

Several weeks ago, in the Third Committee, I commented that the Principality of Andorra is very concerned about unemployment, which is dragging these new generations towards the abyss of poverty and absence of social integration, to drugs and crime, because opportunities are lacking. We note with concern the statistics showing that the lack of work is affecting young people more tragically than other age groups. In the developing countries the total labour force has increased by more than 400 million units since the 1960s, and during this decade it will increase by 2.3 per cent annually, necessitating the creation of 260 million new jobs. As we have noted several times, this is a fantastic challenge, but also one of frightening magnitude.

Dialogue between the generations must be re-established so that young job-seekers do not push out their elders who have already benefited from the integration of work. There will probably be a need to juggle work schedules or to create jobs with flexible hours so that workers can share the possibilities for employment. In any case, that is a question to which we will have to give active consideration.

During the celebration of this fiftieth anniversary year, the Principality of Andorra has paid a great deal of attention to youth and children. In the first half of 1995, I visited a school in Harlem, PS 206, in order to share the message of the United Nations with young people of New York, the host city of our deliberations. A few weeks after that meeting, Ambassador Marrero of the United States and I opened this General Assembly Hall to those children to explain to them the purposes and possibilities of our Organization. In July, Andorra brought more than 50 young members of its national choir to United Nations Headquarters to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary through music. Later, in September, 10 young winners of the special prize of the National Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary were invited to visit the United Nations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality also signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child during his stay in New York in early October. The Andorran Parliament will soon decide on its ratification.

I have received instructions and the means to move forward, on behalf of my country, on the question of youth. Today, I assure the Assembly that this will happen. It is essential that the United Nations do all in its power to ensure that the ideals of the 1945 Charter, based on a concept of the human being endowed with freedom and reason, have real meaning for young people. The salvation of our planet depends on this.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the State of the United Arab Emirates, I am pleased to participate in this special meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, which coincides with the celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. That coincidence imbues the occasion with greater impetus and prospects for carrying out a review and assessment of the policies that have been adopted on the issue of youth at the national, regional and international levels.

The 10 years that have passed since the proclamation, in 1985, of the International Youth Year have witnessed many speedy economic, political, social and cultural developments which have impacted on all human communities and, in particular, the young, who number over 1 billion of the world's inhabitants. Eighty-four per cent of those young people live in the developing countries, which suffer from hunger, poverty, unemployment, backwardness, political instability and lack of security. These negative phenomena have been reflected in the delinquency, violence and extremism which afflict the societies of those developing countries, and which have created difficult problems that cannot be contained unless we fully understand the problems of the young, their aspirations and the important role they could play in the various spheres of international life. We live in an age that requires us to innovate and to be creative in a manner that should be inspired by our common values and the shared sense of responsibility towards our present and future generations.

A few days ago, our Heads of State and Government met in this very Hall to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In the Declaration adopted on that occasion, they pledged to:

> "give to the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established" *(A/50/48, p. 2)*

in the fields of peace, development, equality and justice. We feel that none of this could be achieved unless we accord the highest priority to youth as principal partners in this endeavour and as the cultural bridge between past, present and future generations. While the international community realizes that the young, with all their affiliations and cultural backgrounds are the principal human resource in the area of economic development and the effective element of social change and scientific creativity, we feel an increasing anxiety towards the lot of youth, especially in the countries of the developing world, where economic and social circumstances deprive them of the opportunities for training, education, employment, basic social services and health care. This leads to the emigration by large numbers of youth to more developed or wealthier countries, in search of better job opportunities, higher standards and decent living. This has created clear imbalances in many communities, limited the possibilities of utilizing the environment and has thus widened the economic and social gap between the developed and the developing countries.

The leaders of the world — who recently committed themselves here to participate effectively in reforming and restructuring of the programmes and institutions of the United Nations, in strengthening its objectives, and in reorienting its policies, in serving the world's peoples, especially in the developing countries, have agreed that efforts should be deployed and steps should be taken towards rehabilitating and educating the young and responding to their needs. For the most part, these young people have been used and exploited as tools of war, armed conflicts, violence, terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. Because the young are the makers, beneficiaries and victims of social and economic changes, it has become extremely important to evolve the necessary mechanisms and the sound comprehensive international approach to help support and improve the situation of youth, especially in the poorer communities. In so doing, consideration must be taken of cultural and social diversity, the religious teachings, customs and traditions of each country, and the needs of every society in the areas of peace, security and sustainable development.

Proceeding from its belief that its youth are its real wealth and the mainstay of its present and future, and in response to the call by our Head of State, His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates has always accorded a high priority, in formulating its development policies, to the question of youth through the promulgation of legislation and the provision of the basic requirements for putting in place the best possible education curricula, health and social programmes, free of charge, as a service to the sons of our country, in line with our national systems and regional and international policies. At the same time, we have striven to preserve the specific nature of our local community, which derives its teachings from the tolerant *sharia* of Islam and the traditions of our society.

In the field of education, my country has made a number of qualitative and quantitative achievements, by putting in place comprehensive educational policies at all levels, from primary education to university and post-graduate levels.

Furthermore, we have always made a point of providing all health care services while improving their quality. We have also established many cultural and sports clubs and recreational centres. We have provided the most advanced facilities for the disabled and for rehabilitation of delinquent youth. We have focused on improving the situation of "underprivileged families" healthwise, economically and socially. We have also sought to create job opportunities for the youth of such families and have enabled them to take part in various missions abroad. We provide several types of assistance and support to many activities aimed at benefiting the young in many developing countries.

The major challenges that face today's world and in particular those that face the young, who shoulder the burden of preserving and developing the present and building the future, make it incumbent on the international community to work for the achievement of peace, progress and prosperity for all peoples by trying to pre-empt conflicts and improving the means of finding peaceful solutions to current conflicts in consonance with the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international law.

We must also make a great effort to combat poverty, backwardness, social and economic problems and alleviate the burden of debt, in order for the developing countries to mobilize the capabilities of their youth and, thereby, to allow them to participate fully in the development process. This requires the United Nations to develop and update its programmes for youth which constitute the practical steps that enhance their participation in the building of peace, security and stability and in fostering the coexistence of the world's countries.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of Suriname.

Mrs. Klein-Loebman Tobing (Suriname): I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to take this opportunity during the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year to add the voice of our youth to the useful contributions we have heard so far. I am very impressed with the statements young people have made at these special commemorative meetings, in which they have urged their respective Governments and the international community to involve youth when it comes to matters of development regarding youth so that the main theme of International Youth Year — "Participation, Development and Peace" — can become a reality. These young representatives, who are the future of their countries, of our countries, are right, and they deserve to be commended for their impressive messages.

In January 1995, the Government of Suriname established a tenth anniversary International Youth Year Committee, which selected as its main theme, "Improving the situation of youth by supporting their own initiatives".

Some of the activities of the Surinamese tenth-anniversary International Youth Year Committee so far have been the organization of a National Youth Consultative Meeting in June 1995 and the convening on 24 October 1995, United Nations Day, of a Youth Assembly, which focused on the problems of and solutions for crime, prostitution, child labour, education, youth and environment.

The delegation of the Republic of Suriname is of the view that we, the elders, must involve youth when it comes to the formulation of policies, programmes and decisions regarding them. My delegation would like to assure young people of our solidarity with their justified desire for full participation, development and peace.

In this context, the draft World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond constitutes a sound basis and a good guideline for developing essential activities in the interest of youth in such areas as education, employment, poverty, health, environment, drug abuse and juvenile delinquency. Suriname's youth will gladly develop activities in these areas on the basis of this draft World Programme and, wherever possible and necessary, in close cooperation with youth from other parts of the world.

We hereby appeal in particular to the representatives of donor countries and United Nations donor agencies to provide the necessary resources, because with their generous contributions youth can fulfil their essential and noble task of realizing peace, democracy and development for all peoples all over the world.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the plenary meetings devoted to marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

I should like to inform members that consideration of this item will be resumed later, at a date to be announced.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 105.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to make an announcement concerning some changes in the programme of work.

First, I should like to inform members that the report of the Second Committee to be considered under agenda item 12, entitled "Report of the Economic and Social Council", will be taken up as the first item tomorrow morning, Wednesday, 1 November 1995, as indicated in today's *Journal*.

The consideration of agenda item 21, entitled "University for Peace", scheduled as the first item for Tuesday morning, 7 November, is postponed to a later date, to be announced.

Agenda item 25, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Latin American Economic System", originally scheduled for consideration on Thursday morning, 9 November, will now be the first item for Wednesday morning, 15 November 1995.

On Monday, 27 November, agenda item 37, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", will be added as the first item in the morning.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.